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EDWIN BROTHERTON.

BY

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AUTHOR OF "CECIL DREEME" AND "JOHN BRENT."

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P A R T I.

EDWIN BROTHERTOFT.

I.

THE Cavaliers always ran when they saw Puritan Colonel Brothertoft and his troop of white horses coming.

They ran from the lost battle of Horncastle, in the days of the great rebellion, and the Colonel chased.

North and West he chased over the heaths and wolds of his native Lincolnshire. Every leap took him farther away from the peaked turrets of Brothertoft Manor-House,—his home, midway between the towers of Lincoln Cathedral and Boston on the Witham.

Late at night he rode wearily back to Horncastle. He first took care that those famous horses were fed a good feed, after their good fight and brave chase, and then laid himself down in his cloak to sleep beside Cromwell and Fairfax.

Presently a youth on a white horse came gallop-

ing into the town, up to the quaint house where the Colonel quartered, and shouted for him. Brothertoft looked out at the window. By the faint light he recognized young Galsworthy, son of his richest tenant and trustiest follower.

“The King’s people have attacked the Manor-House,” cried the boy. “My lady is trying to hold it with the servants. I come for help.”

In a moment a score of men were mounted and dashing southward. Ten miles to go. They knew every foot of it. The twenty white horses galloped close, and took their leaps together steadily,—an heroic sight to be seen in that clear, frosty night of October!

The fire of dawn already glimmered in the east when they began to see another fire on the southern horizon. The Colonel’s heart told him whose towers were burning. They rode their best; but they had miles to go, and the red flames outran them.

Colonel Brothertoft said not a word. He spurred on, and close at his heels came the troop, with the fire shining on their corselets and gleaming in the eyes of their horses.

Safe! yes; the house might go,—for his dear wife was safe, and his dear son, his little namesake Edwin, was safe in her arms.

The brave lady too had beaten off the marauders. But fight fire as they would, they could

rescue only one angle of the mansion. That “curious new brique fabrick, four square, with a turret at each corner, two good Courts, a fine Library, and most romantick Wildernessee ; a pleasant noble seat, worthie to be noted by alle,” — so it is described in an Itinerary of 1620, — had been made to bear the penalty for its master’s faith to Freedom.

“There is no service without suffering,” he quietly said, as he stood with the fair Lucy, his wife, after sunrise, before the smoking ruins.

He looked west over the green uplands of his manor, and east over his broad acres of fenny land, billowy with rank grass, and all the beloved scene seemed strange and unlovely to him.

Even the three beautiful towers of Lincoln Cathedral full in view, his old companions and monitors, now emphasized the devastation of his home.

He could not dally with regrets. There was still work for him and the Brothertoft horses to do. He must leave his wife well guarded, and gallop back.

So there was a parting and a group, — the fair wife, the devoted soldier, the white charger, and the child awakened to say good-bye, and scared at his father’s glinting corselet, — a group such as a painter loves.

The Colonel bore westward to cross the line

of march of the Parliamentary army, and by and by, as he drew nearer the three towers of Lincoln, they began to talk to him by Great Tom, the bell.

From his youth up, the Great Tom of Lincoln, then in full swing and full roar, had aroused, warned, calmed, and comforted him, singing to him, along the west wind, pious chants, merry refrains, graceful madrigals, stirring lyrics, more than could be repeated, even "if all the geese in Lincoln's fens Produced spontaneous well-made pens," and every pen were a writer of poetry and music.

To-day Great Tom had but one verse to repeat,

"Westward ho! A new home across the seas."

This was its stern command to the Puritan Colonel, saddened by the harm and cruelty of war.

"Yes, my old oracle," he replied, "if we fail, if we lose Liberty here, I will obey, and seek it in the New World."

For a time it seemed that they had not failed. England became a Commonwealth. Brothertoft returned in peace to his dismantled home. Its ancient splendors could never be restored. Three fourths of the patriot's estate were gone. He was too generous to require back from his party, in its success, what he had frankly given for the

nation's weal. He lived quietly and sparingly. His sole extravagance was, that, as a monument of bygone grandeur, he commissioned Sir Anthony Vandyck to paint him, his wife, his boy, and the white charger, as they stood grouped for the parting the morning of the fire.

So green ivy covered the ruins, and for years Great Tom of Lincoln never renewed its sentence of exile.

Time passed. Kingly Oliver died. There was no Protector blood in gentle Richard Cromwell. He could not wield the land. "Ho for cavaliers! hey for cavaliers!" In came the Merrie Monarch. Out Puritans, and in Nell Gwynn! Out crop-ears and in love-locks! Away sad colors! only frippery is the mode. To prison stout John Bunyan; to office slight Sam Pepys! To your blind study, John Milton, and indite *Paradise Lost*; to Whitehall, John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, and scribble *your* poem, "Nothing!" Yes; go Bigotry, your jackboots smell unsavory; enter Prelacy in fine linen and perfume! *Procul, O procul, Libertas!* for, alas! English knees bend to the King's mistress, and English voices swear, "The King can do no wrong." Boom sullenly, Great Tom of Lincoln, the dirge of Freedom!

Ring solemnly, Great Tom of Lincoln, to Colonel Brothertoft the stern command revived.

Syllable again along the west wind the sentence of exile,—

“Westward ho! A new home across the seas!”

Every day the nation cringed baser and baser. Every day the great bell, from its station high above all the land, shouted more vehemently to the lord of Brothertoft Manor to shake the dust from his feet, and withdraw himself from among a people grown utterly dastard. His young hopes were perished. His old associates were slain or silenced. He would go.

And just at this moment, when in 1665 all freedom was dead in England, Winthrop of Connecticut wrote to his friend at Brothertoft Manor: “We have conquered the Province of New Netherlands. The land is goodlie, and there is a great brave river running through the midst of it. Sell thy Manor, bring thy people, and come to us. We need thee, and the like of thee, in our new communities. We have brawn enow, and much godliness and singing of psalms; but gentlemen and gentlewomen be few among us.”

So farewell to England, debauched and disgraced!

Great Tom of Lincoln tolled farewell, and the beautiful tower of St. Botolph's at Boston saw the exiles out to sea.

II.

BLUFF is the bow and round as a pumpkin is the stern of the Dutch brig, swinging to its anchor in the bay of New York. It is the new arrival from England, this sweet autumn day of 1665. The passengers land. Colonel Brothertoft and family! Welcome, chivalric gentleman, to this raw country! You and your class are needed here.

And now disembark a great company of Lincolnshire men, old tenants or old soldiers of the Colonel's. Their names are thorough Lincolnshire. Here come Wrangles, Swinesheads, Timberlands, Mumbys, Bilsbys, Hogsthorpes, Swillingores, and Galsworthys, old and young, men and women.

These land, and stare about forlornly, after the manner of emigrants. They sit on their boxes, and wish they were well back in the old country. They see the town gallows, an eminent object on the beach, and are taught that where man goes, crime goes also. A frowzy Indian paddles ashore with clams to sell; at

this vision, their dismayed scalps tremble on their sinciputs. A sly Dutchman, the fatter prototype of to-day's emigrant runner, stands before them and says, seductively, "Bier, Schnapps!" They shake their heads firmly, and respond, "Nix!"

Colonel Brothertoft was received with due distinction by Governor Nicolls and Mayor Willet. Old Peter Stuyvesant was almost consoled that Hollanders were sent to their Bouweries to smoke and grow stolid, if such men as this new-comer were to succeed them in power.

The Colonel explored that "great brave river" which Connecticut Winthrop had celebrated in his letter. Its beautiful valley was "all before him where to choose." Dutch land-patents were plenteous in market as villa sites after a modern panic. Crown grants were to be had from the new proprietary, almost for the asking.

The lord of old Brothertoft Manor selected his square leagues for the new Manor of Brothertoft at the upper end of Westchester County, bordering upon the Highlands of the Hudson. A few pioneer Dutchmen — De Witts, Van Warts, and Canadys — were already colonized there. His Lincolnshire followers soon found their places; but they came from the fens, and did not love the hills, and most of them in time dispersed to flatter country.

The new proprietor's wealth was considerable for America. He somewhat diminished it by reproducing, as well as colonial workmen could do, that corner of the old manor-house untouched by the fire. It grew up a strange exotic, this fine mansion, in the beautiful wilderness. The "curious fabrick" of little imported bricks, with its peaked turret, its quaint gables, its square bay-window, and grand porch, showed incongruously at first, among the stumps of a clearing.

And there the exiled gentleman tried to live an exotic life. He bestowed about him the furniture of old Brothertoft Manor. He hung his Vandyck on the wall. He laid his presentation copy of Mr. John Milton's new poem, *Paradise Lost*, on the table.

But the vigor and dash of the Colonel's youth were gone. His heart was sick for the failure of liberty at home. The rough commonplace of pioneering wearied him. He had done his last work in life when he uprooted from England, and transferred his race to flourish or wither on the new soil. He had formed the family character; he had set the shining example. Let his son sustain the honor of the name!

The founder of Brothertoft Manor died, and a second Edwin, the young Astyanax of Vandyck's picture, became the Patroon.

A third Edwin succeeded him, a fourth fol-

lowed, and in 1736 the fifth Edwin Brothertoft was born. He was an only child, like each of his forefathers. These pages chronicle his great joy and his great sorrow, and how he bore himself at a crisis of his individual life. Whoever runs may read stories like his in the broad light of to-day. This one withdraws itself into the *chiaroscuro* of a recent past.

The Brothertoft fortunes did not wax on the new continent. Each gentle Edwin transmitted to his heir the Manor docked of a few more square miles, the mansion a little more dilapidated, the furniture more worn and broken, the name a little less significant in the pushing world of the Province.

But each Edwin, with the sword and portrait of the first American, handed down the still more precious heirlooms of the family,—honor unblemished, quick sympathies, a tender heart, a generous hand, refinement, courtesy,—in short, all the qualities of mind and person that go “to grace a gentleman.”

It became the office of each to be the type gentleman of his time.

Perhaps that was enough. Perhaps they were purposely isolated from other offices. Nature takes no small pains to turn out her type blackguard a complete model of ignobility, and makes it his exclusive business to be himself. Why

should she not be as careful with the antagonistic order?

The Brothertofts always married women like themselves, the female counterparts of their mild manhood. Each wife blended with her husband. No new elements of character appeared in the only child. Not one of them was a father vigorous enough to found a sturdy clan with broad shoulders and stiff wills, ordained to success from the cradle.

They never held their own in the world, much less took what was another's. Each was conscious of a certain latent force, and left it latent. They lived weakly, and died young, like fair exotics. They were a mild, inefficient, ineffectual, lovely, decaying race, strong in all the charming qualities, feeble in all the robust ones.

And now let the procession of ancestors fade away into shadows; and let the last shadow lead forth the hero of this history in his proper substance!

III.

EDWIN BROTHERTOFT, fifth of that name, had been two years at Oxford, toiling at the peaceful tasks and dreaming the fair dreams of a young scholar.

It was the fashion of that time to send young men of property to be educated and Anglicized in England.

Bushwhackers and backwoodsmen the new continent trained to perfection. Most of the Colonists knew that two and two make four, and could put this and that together. But lore, classic or other,—heavy lore out of tomes,—was not to be had short of the old country. The Massachusetts and Connecticut mills, Harvard and Yale, turned out a light article of domestic lore, creditable enough considering their inferior facilities for manufacture ; the heavy British stuff was much preferred by those who could afford to import it.

Edwin went to be Anglicized. Destiny meant that he shall not be. His life at Oxford came to a sharp end.

His father wrote: "My son, I am dying the early death of a Brothertoft. I have been foolish enough to lose the last of our fortune. Come home and forgive me!"

Beautiful Oxford! Fair spires and towers and dreamy cloisters,—dusky chapels, and rich old halls,—green gardens, overlooked by lovely oriels,—high avenues of elms for quiet contemplation,—companionship of earnest minds,—a life of simple rules and struggles without pain,—how hard it was for the young man to leave all this!

It was mid-January, 1757, when he saw home again.

A bleak prospect. The river was black ice. Dunderberg and the Highlands were chilly with snow. The beech-trees wore their dead leaves, in forlorn protest against the winter-time. The dilapidated Manor-House published the faded fortunes of its tenants.

"Tenants at will," so said the father to his son, in the parlor where Vandyck's picture presided.

"Whose will?" Edwin asked.

"Colonel Billop's."

"The name is new to me."

"He is a half-pay officer and ex-army-contractor,—a hard, cruel man. He has made a great fortune, as such men make fortunes."

“ Will his method suit me, father? You know I have mine to make.”

“ Hardly. I am afraid you could not trade with the Indians,—a handful of beads for a beaver-skin, a ‘big drunk’ for a bale of them.”

“ I am afraid not.”

“ I fear your conscience is too tender to let you put off beef that once galloped under the saddle to feed troops.”

“ Yes; and I love horses too much to encourage hippophagy.”

“ Could you look up men in desperate circumstance, and take their last penny in usury?”

“ Is that his method?”

“ Certainly. And to crown all, could you seduce your friend into a promising job, make the trustful fool responsible for the losses, and when they came, supply him means to pay them, receiving a ruinous mortgage as security? This is what he has done to me. Do any of these methods suit my son?” asked the elder, with a gentleman’s scorn.

“ Meanness and avarice are new to me,” the junior rejoined, with a gentleman’s indignation. “ Can a fortune so made profit a man?”

“ Billop will not enjoy it. He is dying, too. His heirs will take possession, as mine retire.”

Edwin could not think thus coolly of his father’s death. To check tears, he went on with his queries.

“He has heirs, then, our unenviable successor?”

“One child, heir or heiress; I do not remember which.”

“Heir or heiress, I hope the new tenant will keep the old place in order, until I can win it back for you, father.”

“It cheers me greatly, my dear son,” said the father, with a smile on his worn, desponding face, “to find that you are not crushed by my avowal of poverty.”

“The thought of work exhilarates me,” the younger proudly returned.

“We Brothertofts have always needed the goad of necessity,” said the senior, in apology for himself and his race.

“Now, then, necessity shall make us acquainted with success. I will win it. You shall share it.”

“In the spirit, not in the body. But we will not speak of that. Where will you seek your success, here or there?”

He pointed to Vandyck’s group of the Parliamentary Colonel and his family. The forefather looked kindly down upon his descendants. Each of them closely resembled that mild, heroic gentleman.

“Here or in the land of our ancestors?” the father continued. “Your generation has the

choice. No other will. These dull, deboshed Hanoverians on the throne of England will crowd us to revolution, as the Stuarts did the mother country."

"Then Westchester may need a Brothertoft, as Lincolnshire did," cries Edwin, ardently. His face flushed, his eye kindled, it seemed as if the Colonel, in the vigor of youth, had stepped down from the canvas.

His father was thrilled. A life could not name itself wasted which had passed to such a son.

"But let us not be visionary, my boy," he went on more quietly, and with weak doubts of the wisdom of enthusiasm. "England offers a brilliant career to one of your figure, your manners, and your talents. Our friends there do not forget us, as you know, for all our century of rustication here. When I am gone, and the Manor is gone, you will have not one single tie of property or person in America."

"I love England," said Edwin, "I love Oxford; the history, the romance, and the hope of England are all packed into that grand old casket of learning; but"— and he turned towards the portrait—"the Colonel embarked us on the continent. He would frown if we gave up the great ship and took to the little pinnace again."

Clearly the young gentlemen was not Angli-

cized. He went on gayly to say, "that he knew the big ship was freighted with pine lumber, and manned by Indians, while the pinnace was crammed with jewels, and had a king to steer and peers to pull the halyards; but still he was of a continent, Continental in all his ideas and fancies, and could not condescend to be an Islander."

Then the gentlemen continued to discuss his decision in a lively tone, and to scheme pleasantly for the future. They knew that gravity would bring them straightway to sadness.

Sadness must come. Both perceived that this meeting was the first in a series of farewells.

Daily interviews of farewell slowly led the father and the son to their hour of final parting.

How tenderly this dear paternal and filial love deepened in those flying weeks of winter. The dying man felt his earthly being sweetly completed by his son's affection. His had been a somewhat lonely life. The robust manners of his compeers among the Patroons had repelled him. The early death of his wife had depressed and isolated him. No great crisis had happened to arouse and nerve the decaying gentleman.

"Perhaps," he said, "I should not have accepted a merely negative life, if your mother had been with me to ripen my brave purposes into stout acts. Love is the impelling force of life.

Love wisely, my son ! lest your career be worse than failure, a hapless ruin and defeat."

These boding words seemed spoken with the clairvoyance of a dying man. They were the father's last warnings.

The first mild winds of March melted the snow from the old graveyard of Brothertoft Manor on a mount overlooking the river. There was but a little drift to scrape away from the vault door when they came to lay Edwin Brothertoft, fourth of that name, by the side of his ancestors.

I V.

FOUR great Patroons came to honor their peer's funeral.

These were Van Cortlandt, Phillipse with his son-in-law Beverley Robinson, from the neighborhood, and Livingston from above the Highlands.

They saw their old friend's coffin to its damp shelf, and then walked up to the manor-house for a slice of the funeral baked meats and a libation to the memory of the defunct.

A black servant carved and uncorked for them. He had the grand air, and wielded knife and corkscrew with dignity. Voltaire the gentlemen called him. He seemed proud to bear the name of that eminent destructive.

The guests eat their fat and lean with good appetite. Then they touched glasses, and sighed over another of their order gone.

“The property is all eaten up with mortgages, I hear,” says Phillipse, with an appropriate doleful tone.

“Billop swallows the whole, the infernal

usurer ! ” Van Cortlandt rejoined, looking lugubriously at his fellows, and then cheerfully at his glass.

“ He’s too far gone to swallow anything. The Devil has probably got him by this time. He was dying three days ago,” said Beverley Robinson.

“ Handsome Jane Billop will be our great heiress,” Livingston in turn remarked. “ Let your daughters look to their laurels, Phillipse ! ”

“ My daughters, sir, do not enter the lists with such people.”

“ Come, gentlemen,” jolly Van Cortlandt interjected, “ another glass, and good luck to our young friend here ! I wish he would join us ; but I suppose the poor boy must have out his cry alone. What can we do for him ? We must stand by our order.”

“ I begin to have some faith in the order,” says Livingston, “ when it produces such ‘ preux chevaliers ’ as he. What can we do for him ? Take him for your second son-in-law, Phillipse ! The lovely Mary is still heart-whole, I believe. Our strapping young friend from Virginia, Master George Washington, has caracoled off, with a tear in his eye and a flea in his ear. Slice off twenty or thirty thousand acres from your manor, marry these young people, and set them up. You are too rich for our latitude and our era.”

Mr. Adolphus Phillipse was a slow coach.
The other's banter teased him.

“Mr. Livingston,” he began, swelling and growing red.

“Come, gentlemen,” cries Van Cortlandt, pacificator, “I have a capital plan for young Brothertoft.”

“What?” Omnes inquire.

“He must marry Jane Billop.”

“Ay, he must marry Jane Billop,” Omnes rejoin.

“A glass to it!” cried the proposer.

“Glasses round!” the seconds echo, with subdued enthusiasm.

“A beauty!” says Van Cortlandt, clinking with Phillipse.

“An heiress!” says Phillipse, clinking on.

“An orphan and only child!” says Robinson, touching glasses with his neighbor.

“Sweet sixteen!” says Livingston, blowing a kiss, and completing the circle of clink.

These jolly boys, old and young, were of a tribe on its way to extinction, with the painted sagamores of tribes before them. First came the red nomad, striding over the continent. In time followed the great Patroon, sprawling over all the acres of a county. Finally arrives the unembarrassed gentleman of our time, nomad in youth, settler at maturity, but bound to no spot,

and cribbed in no habitation ; and always packed to move, with a brain full of wits and a pocket full of coupons.

The four proprietors finished their libations and sent for Edwin to say good-bye. His deep grief made any suggestion of their marriage scheme an impertinence.

Jolly Van Cortlandt longed to lay his hand kindly on the young man's shoulder and say, "Don't grieve, my boy ! 'Omnes moriar,' as we used to say at school. Come, let me tell you about a happy marriage we 've planned for you ! "

Indeed, he did arrange this little speech in his mind, and consulted Livingston on its delivery.

"Let him alone!" said that 'magister morum.' "You know as much of love as of Latin. The match is clearly made in heaven. It will take care of itself. He shall have my good word with the lady, and wherever else he wants it. I love a gentleman."

"So do I, naturally," Van says, and he gave the youth honored with this fair title a cordial invitation to his Manor.

The others also offered their houses, hearths, and hearts, sincerely ; and then mounted and rode off on their several prosperous and cheerful ways.

Meanwhile, a group of the tenants of the Manor, standing on the sunny side of the vault, had been discussing the late lord and the prospects of his successor. As the elders talked, their sons and heirs played leap-frog over the tombstones, puffed out their cheeks to rival the cherubs over the compliments in doggerel on the slabs, and spelled through the names of extinct Lincolnshire families, people of slow lungs, who had not kept up with the fast climate.

“I feel as if I’d lost a brother,” said Squire Jierck Dewitt, the chief personage among the tenantry.

“A fine mahn, he was!” pronounced Isaac Van Wart, through a warty nose. “But not spry enough,—not spry enough!”

“Anybody could cheat him,” says lean Hendrecus Canady, the root and Indian doctor, who knew his fact by frequent personal experiments.

“Who’d want to cheat a man that was everybody’s friend?” asked old Sam Galsworthy’s hearty voice.

“The boy’s a thorough Brothertoft, mild as a lamb and brave as a lion,” Dewitt continued. “But I don’t like to think of his being flung on the world so young.”

“He can go down to York and set up a newspaper,” Van Wart suggested.

“If I was him, I’d put in for Squire Billop’s

gal, and have easy times." This was the root doctor's plan.

"Well, if he ever wants a hundred pounds," says Galsworthy,—"ay, or five hundred, for that matter,—he 's only got to put his hand into my pocket."

"You can't put your own hand in, without wrastlin' a good deal," Van Wart says.

Sam laughed, and tried. But he was too paunchy.

"I 'm a big un," he said; "but I was a little un when I got back from that scalpin' trip to Canada, when Horse-Beef Billop was Commissary. I did n't weigh more 'n the Injun doctor here; and he, and that boy he feeds on yaller pills, won't balance eight stone together. It 's bad stock, is the Billop. I hope our young man and the Colonel's gal won't spark up to each other."

It was growing dusk. The dead man's R. I. P. had been pronounced, and the youth's 'Perge puer!' The tenants, members of a class presently to become extinguished with the Patroons, marched off toward the smokes that signalled their suppers. The sons dismounted from the tombstones and followed. Each of them is his father, in boy form. They prance off, exercising their muscles to pull their pound, by and by, at the progress of this history. Old Sam Galswor-

thy junior has hard work to keep up with the others, on account of his back load. He carries on his shoulders little Hendrecus Canady, a bolus-fed fellow, his father's corpus vile to try nostrums upon.

And Edwin Brothertoft sat alone in his lonely home, — his home no more.

Lonely, lonely !

A blank by the fireside, where his father used to sit. A blank in the chamber, where he lay so many days, drifting slowly out of life. Silence now, — silence, which those feeble words of affection, those mild warnings, those earnest prayers, those trailing whispers low from dying lips, would never faintly break again. No dear hand to press. No beloved face to watch sleeping, until it woke into a smile. No face, no touch, no voice ; only a want and an absence in that lonely home.

And if, in some dreamy moment, the son seemed to see the dear form steal back to its accustomed place and the dear face appear, the features wore an eager, yet a disappointed look. So much to say, that now could never be said ! How the father seemed to long to recover human accents, and urge fresh warnings against the passions that harm the life and gnaw the soul, or to reveal some unknown error sadder than a sin.

And sometimes, too, that vision of the father's countenance, faint against a background of twilight, was tinged with another sorrow, and the son thought, "He died, and never knew how thoroughly I loved him. Did I ever neglect him? Was I ever cold or careless? That sad face seems to mildly reproach me with some cruel slight."

The lonely house grew drearier and drearier.

"Colonel Billop," wrote Mr. Skaats, his agent and executor, "has been removed by an all-wise Providence. Under the present circumstances, Mr. Brothertoft, I do not wish to disturb you. But I should be glad to take possession at the Manor at your earliest convenience.

"Respectfully, &c.,

"SKERVEY SKAATS."

Everything, even the priceless portrait of the Puritan Colonel, was covered by the mortgages. Avarice had licked them all over with its slime, and gaped to bolt the whole at a meal.

Edwin did not wish to see a Skervey Skaats at work swallowing the family heirlooms. He invited Squire Dewitt to act for him with the new proprietor's representative.

New York, by that time, had become a thriving little town. The silt of the stream of corn that flowed down the Hudson was enriching it. Ed-

win had brave hopes of making at least his daily bread, there with his brains or his hands.

While he was preparing to go, Old Sam Gals-worthy appeared with a bag of guineas and a fine white mare of the famous Lincolnshire stock,—such a mare as Colonel Brothertoft used to ride, and Prince Rupert's men to run from.

“Squire Dewitt told me you were going to trudge to York,” said Sam.

“I was,” replied the orphan; “my legs will take me there finely.”

“It was in my lease,” said Sam, “to pay a mare-colt every year over and above my rent, besides a six-year-old mare for a harriet, whenever the new heir came in.”

“Heriot, I suppose you mean, Sam.”

“We call 'em heriots when they 're horses, and harriets when they 're mares. Well, your father would n't take the colts since twelve year. He said he was agin tribute, and struck the colts and the harriets all out of my lease. So I put the price of a colt aside for him every year, in case hard times come. There 's twelve colts in this buckskin bag, and this mare is the token that I count you the rightful owner of my farm and the whole Manor. I 've changed her name to Harriet, bein' one. She 's a stepper, as any man can see with half a blinker. The dollars and the beast is yourn, Mister Edwin.”

Edwin shook his head. "You are very kind, Sam; but I am my father's son, and against tribute in any form."

"I have n't loved your father forty year to see his son go afoot. Ride the mare down, anyhow. She don't get motion enough, now that I 'm too heavy for her, bein' seventeen stone three pound and a quarter with my coat off."

Edwin's pride melted under this loyalty.

"I will ride her then, Sam, and thank you. And give me a luck-penny out of the bag."

"You 'll not take the whole?" pleaded Gals-worthy.

No. And when the root-doctor heard this, he stood Hendrecus Canady junior in a receptive position, and dosed him with a bolus of wisdom, as follows:—

"Men is divided into three factions. Them that grabs their chances. Them that chuck away their chances. And them that lets their chances slide. The Brothertofts have alluz ben of the lettin'-slide faction. This one has jined the Chuckin'-Aways. He 'll never come to nothin'. You just swaller that remark, my son, and keep a digestin' of it, if you want to come to anything yourself."

Next morning Edwin took leave of home, and sorrowfully rode away.

A harsh, loud March wind chased him, blow-

ing Harriet Heriot's tail between her legs. The omens were bad.

But when, early the second morning, the orphan crossed King's Bridge, and trod the island of his new career, a Gulf Stream wind, smelling of bananas and sounding of palm-leaves, met him, breathing welcome and success.

V.

WITH youth, good looks, an English education, the manners and heart of a gentleman, and the Puritan Colonel's sword, Edwin Brothertoft-went to New York to open his oyster.

“Hushed in grim repose,” the world, the oyster, lay with its lips tight locked against the brutal oyster-knives of blackguards.

But at our young blade's first tap on the shell the oyster gaped.

How pleasant it is to a youth when his oyster gapes, and indolently offers him the succulent morsel within! His oyster is always uneasy at the hinge until it is generously open for an Edwin Brothertoft. He was that fine rarity, a thorough gentleman.

How rare they were then, and are now! rare as great poets, great painters, great seers, great doers. The fingers of my right hand seem too many when I begin to number off the thorough gentlemen of my own day. But were I ten times Briareus, did another hand sprout whenever I wanted a new tally, I never could count

the thorough blackguards among my contemporaries. So much shade does it take to make sunshine!

The Colonial world gave attention when it heard a young Brothertoft was about to descend into the arena and wrestle for life.

“So that is he!” was the cry. “How handsome! how graceful! how chivalrous! how brilliant! what a bow he makes! his manners disarm every antagonist! He will not take advantages, they say. He is generous, and has visionary notions about fair play. He thinks a beaten foe should not be trampled on or scalped. He thinks enemies ought to be forgiven, and friends to be sustained, through thick and thin. Well, well! such fancies are venial errors in a young aristocrat.”

The city received him as kindly as it does the same manner of youth now, when its population has increased one hundred-fold.

The chief lawyer said, “Come into my office and copy papers, at a pound a week, and in a year you will be a Hortensius.”

The chief merchant said, “If you like the smell of rum, codfish, and beaver-skins, take a place in my counting-house, at a hundred pounds a year, and correct the spelling of my letters. I promise nothing; but I may want a partner by and by.”

The Governor of the Province and Mayor of the town, dullards, as officials are wont to be, each took the young gentleman aside, and said, “Here is a proclamation of mine! Now punctuate it, and put in some fine writing,—about Greece and Rome, you know, and Magna Charta, with a Latin quotation or two,—and I will find you a fat job and plenty of pickings!”

The Livingston party proposed to him to go to the Assembly on their votes and fight the De Lanceys. The De Lanceys, in turn, said, “Represent us, and talk those radical Livingstons down.”

Lord Loudon, Commander-in-Chief, swore that Brothertoft was the only gentleman he had seen among the dashed Provincials. “And,” says he, “you speak Iroquois and French, and all that sort of thing. Be my secretary, and I’ll get you a commission in the army,—dashed if I don’t!”

King’s College, just established, to increase the baker’s dozen of educated men in the Colony, offered the young Oxonian a professorship, Metaphysics, Mathematics, Languages, Belles-Lettres,—in fact whatever he pleased; none of the Trustees knew them apart.

Indeed, the Provincial world prostrated itself before this fortunate youth and prayed him,—

“Be the representative Young American! Convince our unappreciative Mother England:

“That we do not talk through our noses;

“That our language is not lingo;

“That we are not slaves of the Almighty
Wampum;

“That we can produce the Finest Gentlemen,
as well as the Biggest Lakes, the Longest Rivers,
the Vastest Antres, and the Widest Wildernesses
in the World.”

What an oyster-bed, indeed, surrounded our
hero!

Alas for him! He presently found a Pearl.

VI.

HANDSOME Jane Billop wanted a husband. She looked into the glass, and saw Beauty. Into the schedules of her father's will, and saw Heiress.

She determined to throw her handkerchief, as soon as she could discover the right person to pick it up.

“He must belong to a great family,” thought the young lady. “He must promise me to be a great man. He must love me to distraction. I hate the name of Billop! I should look lovely in a wedding-dress!”

She was very young, very premature, motherless, the daughter and companion of a coarse man who had basely made a great fortune. Rich rogues always fancy that their children will inherit only the wealth, and none of the sin. They are shocked when the paternal base metal crops out at some new vein in their progeny. Better not embezzle and oppress, papa, if you wish your daughters to be pure and your sons honest! Colonel Billop did not live to know what kind

of an heiress he and his merciless avarice had fathered.

“I must see this young Brothertoft,” Jane’s reverie continued. “Poor fellow, I have got all his property! Mr. Skaats says he is a very distinguished young gentleman, and will be one of the first men of the Province. Handsome too, and knows lords and ladies in England! Let me see! I cannot meet him anywhere so soon after the funeral. But he might call on me, about business. I feel so lonely and solemn! And I do not seem to have any friends. Everybody courts me for my money, and yet they look down upon me too, because my father made his own fortune.”

Colonel Billop had taken much pains to teach his daughter business habits, and instruct her in all the details of management of property.

She sat down at her desk, and in a bold round hand indited the following note:—

“Mr. Skaats, Miss Billop’s agent, begs that Mr. Brothertoft will do him the favor to call at the house in Wall Street to-morrow at eleven. Mr. Skaats is informed that there is a picture at the Manor-House which Mr. Brothertoft values, and he would be pleased to make an arrangement for the late owner’s retaining it.”

Skilful Jane! to whom a Vandyck was less worth than its length and breadth in brocade.

She sealed this note with Colonel Billop's frank motto, "Per omnia ad opes," and despatched it.

Edwin was delighted at the prospect of recovering his ancestor. It is a mighty influence when the portrait of a noble forefather puts its eye on one who wears his name, and says, by the language of an unchanging look: "I was a Radical in my day; be thou the same in thine! I turned my back upon the old tyrannies and heresies, and struck for the new liberties and beliefs; my liberty and belief are doubtless already tyranny and heresy to thine age; strike thou for the new! I worshipped the purest God of my generation,—it may be that a purer God is revealed to thine; worship him with thy whole heart."

Such a monitor is priceless. Edwin was in a very grateful mood when he knocked at the door in Wall Street.

A bank now rests upon the site of the Billop mansion. Ponderous, grim, granite, stand the two columns of its propylon. A swinging door squeaks "Hail!" to the prosperous lender, and "Avaunt!" to the borrower unindorsed. Within, paying tellers, old and crusty, or young and jaunty, stand, up to their elbows in gold, and smile at the offended dignity of personages not identified presenting checks, and in vain requiring payment. Farther back depositors are feed-

ing money, soft and hard, into the maw of the receiving teller. Behind him, book-keepers wield prodigious ledgers, and run up and down their columns, agile as the lizards of Pæstum. And in the innermost penetralia of that temple of Plutus, the High-Priests, old Dons of Directors worth billions, sit and fancy that they brew crisis or credit.

So stand things now where Edwin Brothertoft once stood contemplating a brass knocker.

The door opened, and he was presently introduced into a parlor, upholstered to the uppermost of its era.

But where is Mr. Skervey Skaats?

Instead of that mean and meagre agent, here is the principal,—a singularly handsome, bold, resolute young woman, her exuberant beauty repressed and her carnations toned down by mourning.

Both the young people were embarrassed for a moment.

He was embarrassed at this unlooked-for substitution of a beautiful girl for an ugly reptile of a Skaats; and she to find how fair a spirit she had conjured up. He with a sudden compunction for the prejudice he had had against the unknown heir, his disinheritor; and she with her instant conviction that here was the person to pick up her handkerchief, if he would.

Shall the talk of these children be here repeated? It might fill a pleasant page; but this history cannot deal with the details of their immature lives. It only makes ready, in this First Act, for the rapid business of a riper period.

When Edwin Brothertoft left the heiress's parlor, after sixty minutes of delight, she seated herself at the desk where she, under the alias Skaats, had indited his invitation, took a fresh sheet of paper and a virgin quill, and wrote:—

Jane Brothertoft.

Then the same in backhand, with flourishes and without. Then she printed, in big text:—

LADY JANE BROTHERTOFT, OF BROTHERTOFT HALL.

Then, with a conscious, defiant look, she carried her prophetic autograph to the fire, and watched it burn.

Over the fireplace was a mirror, districted into three parts by gilded mullions. Above was perched a gilt eagle, a very rampant high-flier indeed. Two wreaths of onions, in the disguise of pomegranates, were festooned from his beak, and hung in alluring masses on either side of the frame. Quite a regiment of plump little cherubs, clad in gilding, tight as it could fit, clung in the wreaths, and sniffed at their fragrance. Jane looked up and saw herself in the mirror. A blush deepened her somewhat carnal

carnations. Every cherub seemed to be laughing significantly. She made a face at the merry imps. As she did so, she caught sight of the reflection of her father's portrait, also regarding her. He was such a father as a child would have been quite justified in disowning and utterly cutting, if a stranger had asked, "Who is that horrid person with the red face, the coarse jowl, the permanent leer, and cruel look?" An artist, cunning in red for the face and white for the ruffles, had made this personage more butchery even than Nature intended.

Jane Billop marched up to the portrait, and turned it with its face toward the wall.

"He need n't look at me, and tell me I am courting Mr. Edwin Brothertoft," she said to herself. "I know I am, and I mean to have him. He is lovely; but I almost hate him. He makes me feel ignorant and coarse and mean. I don't want to be the kind of woman he has been talking to with that deferential address. But I suppose this elegant manner is all put on, and he is really just like other people. He seems to be pretty confident of carrying the world before him. We shall be the great people of the Province. Here comes the distinguished Sir Edwin Brothertoft, and Lady Jane, his magnificent wife! People shall not pretend to look down upon me any more, because my father knew how

to make money, when fools threw it away. I've got a **Manor**, too, Miss Mary Phillipse; and I'm handsomer than you, and not almost an old maid. That little chit of a **Mayor** Cruger's daughter's had better not try to patronize me again, nor Julia Peartree Smith turn up her poor pug nose. They'll all want invitations to Mrs. Brothertoft's ball on going out of mourning. How they will envy me my **Edwin**! What a beautiful bow he makes! What a beautiful voice he has! June is a lovely month for a wedding."

There is never joy in Wall Street now such as filled the heart of **Edwin Brothertoft** on that morning of a bygone century. The **Billops** of our time live a league up town, and plot on **Murray Hill** for lovers of good family.

Edwin had found his **Pearl**,—a glorious, flashing **Ruby** rather. Its gleam exhilarated him. His heart and his heels were so light, that he felt as if he could easily spring to the top of the spire of **Old Trinity**, which was at least a hundred feet lower than the crocketty structure now pointing the moral of Wall Street. He walked away from **Miss Billop's** door in a maze of delight, too much bewildered by this sudden bliss to think of analyzing it.

So the young payee, whose papa's liberal check for his quarter's allowance has just been cashed, may climb from the bank on the site of the **Billop**

house, as far as Broadway, content with the joy of having tin, without desiring to tinkle it.

But at the corner Edwin's heart began to speak to him with sentiments and style quite different from the lady's.

"How she startled me with her brilliant beauty! How kind it was to think of my valuing the portrait! How generously and how delicately she offered it! And I had done her the injustice of a prejudice! That wrong I will redress by thinking of her henceforth all the more highly and tenderly.

"Poor child! a lonely orphan like myself. She showed in all our interview how much she yearned for friendship. Mine she shall have. My love? yes, yes, my love! But that must stay within my secret heart, and never find a voice until I have fully assured my future.

"And this warm consciousness of a growing true love shall keep me strong and pure and brave. Thank God and her for this beautiful influence! With all the kindness I have met, I was still lonely, still desponding. Now I am jubilant; everything is my friend and my comrade. Yes; ring out, gay bells of Trinity! What is it you are ringing? A marriage? Ah, happy husband! happy bride! I too am of the brotherhood of Love. Ring, merry bells! Your songs shall be of blissful omen to my heart."

VII.

SUCH soliloquies as those of the last chapter presently led to dialogue of the same character.

The lady continued to scribble that brief romance, or rather that title of a romance.

“Lady Jane Brothertoft of Brothertoft Hall.”

The lover for his part was not a dunce. He soon perceived that it was his business to supply the situations and the talk under this title, and help the plot to grow.

It grew with alarming rapidity.

Tulips were thrusting their green thumbs through the ground in the Dutch gardens of the town when the young people first met. Tulips had flaunted their day and gone to green seed-vessels with a little ruffle at the top, and cabbage-roses were in young bud, when the first act of the drama ended.

The lady was hardly as coy as Galatea in the eclogue. The lover might have been repelled by the large share she took in the courtship. But he was a true, blind, eager young lover, utterly absorbed in a fanaticism of affection.

Indeed, if in the tumult of his own bliss he had perceived that the lady was reaching beyond her line to beckon him, this would have seemed another proof that she and he were both obeying a Divine mandate. What young lover disputes his mistress's right to share the passion ?

“ I knew it,” he said to her, by and by,—“ I knew from the first moment we met, that we must love one another. We are perfect counterparts,— the halves of a perfect whole. But you the nobler. I felt from the moment that pleasant incident of the portrait had brought us together, that we were to be united. I hardly dared give my hope words. But I knew in my heart that the benign powers would not let me love so earnestly and yet desperately.”

These fine fervors seemed to her a little ridiculous, but very pretty. She looked in the glass, where the little Cupids in the onion-wreaths were listening, amused with Edwin's rhapsodies, smiled to herself, then smiled to him, and said, “ Matches are made in heaven.”

“ I told you,” he said, “ that I had erased the word *Perhaps* from my future. Now that I am in the way to prosperity and distinction for myself, and that you smile, success offers itself to me drolly. The Great Lawyer proposes to me a quadruple salary, and quarters the time in which I am to become a Hortensius. The Great Mer-

chant offers me three hundred a year at once, a certain partnership, and promises to abandon codfish and go into more fragrant business."

They laughed merrily over this. Small wit wakes lovers' glee.

"I like you better in public life," she said. "You must be a great man immediately."

"Love me, and I will be what you love."

"I am so glad I am rich. Such fine things can be done with money."

"I should be terribly afraid of your wealth, if I was not sure of success on my side. As it is, we have the power of a larger usefulness."

"Yes," she said, carelessly.

He did not notice her indifferent manner, for he had dashed into a declamation of his high hopes for his country and his time. Those were the days when ardent youths were foreseeing Revolution and Independence.

She did not seem much interested in this rhapsody.

"I love to hear you talk of England and the great people you knew there," said she. "Is not Brothertoft Manor-House very much like an English country-seat?"

"Yes; but if it were well kept up, there would be no place so beautiful in England,—none so grand by nature, I mean."

Here followed another rhapsody from this

poetic youth on the Manor and its people, the river and the Highlands.

She was proud of her lover's eloquence, although she did not sympathize much in his enthusiasms. She had heard rivers talked of as water-power or roads for water-carriage. Mountains had been generally abused in the Billop establishment as ungainly squatters on good soil. Forests were so many feet of timber. Tenants were serfs, who could be squeezed to pay higher rents, and ought to be the slaves of their landlords.

But she listened, and felt complimented while Edwin painted the scenery of her new piece of property with glowing fancy, and while he made each of the tenants the hero of a pastoral idyl. A manor that could be so commended must be worth more money than she had supposed.

"I begin to long to see it," she said, with real interest. "And that dear old fat Sam Galsworthy, who lent you the horse, I must thank him."

"Why not go up, as soon as June is fairly begun?"

"Mr. Skaats would not know all the pretty places."

They looked at each other an instant,—she bold and imperious, he still timidly tender.

“ If I only dared ! ” he said.

“ Men always dare, do they not ? ” she rejoined, without flinching.

“ Are you lonely here ? ” he asked.

“ Bitterly, except when you come. Are you ? ”

“ Sadly, except when I am with you.”

Another exchange of looks,—she a little softened, and oppressed with the remembrance of the sudden, voiceless, unconscious death of her father,—he softened too, measuring her loss by his, tenderer for her than before, but not quite so timid.

“ Both very lonely,” he continued, with a smile. “ Two negatives make an affirmative. Do you love me ? ”

“ I am afraid I am already committed on that subject.”

“ Why should we not put our two solitudes together, and make society ? ”

“ Why not ? ”

“ Mr. Skaats would be a poor guide to Brothertoft Manor.”

“ Mr. Skaats ! ” she said impatiently, as if she were dismissing a feline intruder. “ We were not talking of him.”

“ No. I was merely thinking I could recommend you a better cicerone.”

“ Who can you possibly mean ? ”

“ Myself.”

“ Ah ! ”

“ Brothertoft Manor would be a lovely place to spend a honeymoon in.”

“ I long to see it, after your description.”

“ June there is perfection.”

“ June ! and this is May ! ”

“ Will you go there with me in June, my dearest love ? ”

“ Yes, Edwin.”

It was agreed among all the gossips of the Province—and the gossips were right—that this was not a mercenary match. Youth and beauty on both sides, what could be more natural than love and marriage ? And then the gossips went on to weigh the Brothertoft name against the Billop fortune, and to pronounce—for New York in those days loved blood more than wampum—that the pounds hardly balanced the pedigree. Both parties were in deep mourning. Of course there could be no great wedding. But all the female quality of the Province crowded to Trinity Church to see the ceremony. The little boys cheered lustily when the Billop coach, one of the three or four in town, brought its broadside to bear against the church porch, and, opening its door, inscribed with the Billop motto, “ Per omnia ad opes,”

discharged the blushing bridegroom and his bride.

The beadle — for beadles have strutted on our soil — quelled the boys, and ushered the happy pair to the chancel-rail. It is pleasant to know that the furniture of the altar, reading-desk, and pulpit, which met their eyes, was crimson damask of the “richest and costliest kind,” and cost in England forty-two pounds eleven shillings and threepence.

Venerable Rector Barclay read the service, with a slight Mohawk accent. He had been for some years missionary among that respectable tribe,—not, be it observed, the unworthy off-shoot known as Mohocks and colonized in London,—and had generally persuaded his disciples to cut themselves down from polygamy to bigamy. Reverend Samuel Auchmuthy assisted the Rector with occasional interjections of Amen.

The great officials of the Province could not quit business at this hour ; but the Patroons who happened to be in town mustered strong in honor of their order. Of pretty girls there came galore. Pages would fail to name them and their charms. There was the *espègle* Miss Jay, of that fine old Huguenot Protestant stock, which still protests pertinaciously against iniquity in Church and State. There was the sensible Miss Schuyler, the buxom Miss Beekman,

high-bred Miss Van Rensselaer, Miss Winthrop, faultless in toilette and temper, Miss Morris, wearing the imperious nose of her family, popular Miss Stuyvesant, that Amazonian filly Miss Livingston, handsome Mary Phillipse with her determined chin, Julia Peartree Smith, *nez en l'air* as usual, and a score of others, equally fair, and equally worthy of a place in a fashionable chronicle.

“Poor Edwin Brothertoft!” said the Peartree Smith, as the young ladies filed out after the ceremony. “Did you hear that bold creature make her responses, ‘I Jane take thee Edwin,’ as if she were hailing the organ loft. These vulgar girls understand the policy of short engagements. They don’t wish to be found out. But company manners will not last forever. Poor Mr. Brothertoft! why could he not find a mature woman?” (Julia had this virtue, perhaps, to an exaggerated degree, and had been suspected of designs upon the bridegroom.) “Girls as young as she is have had no chance to correct their ideal. She will correct it at his expense. She will presently find out he is not perfect, and then will fancy some other man would have suited her better. Women should have a few years of flirtation before they settle in life. These pantaloon marriages never turn out well. An engagement of a few weeks to that purse-proud baby, her

father's daughter! Poor Edwin Brothertoft! He will come to disappointment and grief."

With this, Miss Julia, striving to look Cassandra, marches off the stage.

But Edwin Brothertoft had no misgivings. If he had fancied any fault of temper in his betrothed, or perceived any divergence in principle, he had said to himself, "My faithful love shall gently name the fault, or point the error, and her love shall faithfully correct them."

The Billop coach rumbled away on its little journey down Wall Street. Parson Barclay bagged his neat fee and glowed with good wishes. The world buzzed admiration. The little boys huzzaed. The bell-ringer tugged heartily at the bell-rope. And at every tug of his, down on the noisy earth, the musical bells, up in the serene air, responded, "Go, happy pair! All bliss, no bale! All bliss, no bale!"

The rumble of the "leathern conveniency," the applause of Young New York, and the jubilation of the bells were so loud, that Edwin was forced to lean very close to his wife's cheek while he whispered:—

"We were alone, and God has given us each a beloved companion. We are orphans; we shall be all in all to one another. Long, long, and always brightening years of thorough trust and love, dearer than ever was dreamed, lie

before us. How happy we shall be in our glowing hopes! how happy in our generous ambitions! how happy in our earnest life! Ah, my love! how can I love you enough for the gift of this beautiful moment, for the promise of the fairer time to come!"

3*

VIII.

CASSANDRA was right. The marriage went wrong.

It was the old, old, young, young story.

But which of those old young stories?

Ah, yes! there are so many of them. And yet all human tragedies belong to one Trilogy. There are but three kinds of wrongs in our lives.

The wrongs a man does to his own soul or body, or suffers in either.

The wrongs of man against his brother man.

The wrongs between man and woman.

This is one of the old young stories of the wrong between man and woman.

It might be made a very long and very painful story. Chapter after chapter might describe the gradual vanishing of illusions, the slight divergence, the widening of estrangement, the death of trust, the deceit on one side, the wearing misery of doubt on the other, the dragging march step by step, day by day, to the final wrong, the halt on the hither edge, and the careless, the desperate, the irremediable plunge last.

But the statement of the result is sad enough. Let all these dreary chapters be condensed into one!

A fatality preceded the wrong. It was this:—

The woman was coarse, and the man was fine. No gentle influences had received her in the facile days of childhood, and trained her nobler nature to the masterhood. Her eyes had been familiar with vulgar people and their vulgar ways. Her ears had heard their coarse talk. Her mind had narrowed to their ignoble methods of judgment. Her heart's desire had been taught to be for the cheap and mundane possessions, money, show, titles, place, notoriety; and not for the priceless and immortal wages of an earnest life, Peace, Joy, and Love. She could not comprehend a great soul unless its body were dubbed *My Lord* or *Sir Edwin*, and wore some gaud of a star at the breast, or a ribbon at the knee.

Poor child! She was young enough to be docile. But after the blind happiness of that honeymoon at Brothertoft Manor, the old feeling of her first interview with her lover revived and exasperated.

“I believe he wants to make me feel ignorant and vulgar,” she thought, “so that he can govern me. But he shall not. I intend to be mistress. I’m sick of his meek sugges-

tions. No sir ; my way is my way, and I mean to have it.”

And so, rebuked by contact with a delicacy she could not understand, she resolutely coarsened herself, sometimes for spite, sometimes for sorry consolation. Her unsensitive nature trampled roughly on his scruples.

“ My dear Jane,” he said to her at Brothertoft, “ could you not instruct Mr. Skaats to be a little more indulgent with the Manor tenants ? ”

“ Mr. Skaats’s business is to get the rents, for us to spend.”

“ But these people have been used to gentler treatment.”

“ Yes ; they have been allowed to delay and shirk as they pleased. My property must not be wasted as yours was.”

“ It is a hard summer for them, with this drought.”

“ It is an expensive summer for us, with these repairs.”

Again, when they were re-established in New York, other causes of dispute came up.

“ I wish, my dear Jane,” he said, “ that you would be a little more civil with my patriot friends from Boston.”

“ I don’t like people who talk through their noses.”

“ Forgive the twang for the sake of the good sense.”

“ Good sense ! It seems to me tiresome grumbling. I hate the word ‘ Grievance.’ I despise the name Patriot.”

“ Remember, my dear child, that I think with these gentlemen !”

“ Yes ; and you are injuring your reputation and your chances by it. A Brothertoft should be conservative, and stand by his order.”

“ I try to be conservative of Right. I stand by the Order of Worth, Courage, and Loyalty to Freedom.”

“ O, there you go again into your foggy metaphysics !”

Again, he came one day, and said, with much concern : “ My dear, I was distressed to know from Skaats that your father’s estate owned a third of the ‘ Red Rover.’ ”

“ Why ? ” she asked, with no concern.

“ I was sure you did not know, or you would be as much shocked as I am. She is in the slave-trade ! ”

“ Well. And I have often heard my father call her a ‘ tidy bit of property,’ and say she had paid for herself a dozen times.”

He could not make her comprehend his hatred of this vile business, and his contempt, as a gentleman, for all the base subterfuges by which base people tried to defend it.

The Red Rover fortunately did not remain a

subject of discussion. On that very trip the Negroes rose and broiled the captain and crew,— and served them right. Then, being used only to the navigation of dug-outs, they omitted to pump the vessel, whereupon she sunk, and the sharks had a festival.

With such divergences of opinion the first year of this propitious marriage passed miserably enough. Yet there was a time when it seemed to the disappointed husband and the defiant wife that their love might revive.

In 1758, Edwin Brothertoft, rich, aristocratic, and a liberal, the pride of the Colony as its foremost young man, was selected as the mouthpiece of a commission to present at home a petition and remonstrance. Such papers were flying freely across the water at that time. Reams of paper must be fired before the time comes for firing lead.

So to England went the envoy with his gorgeous wife. They were received with much distinction, as worthy young Americans from Benicia and elsewhere still are.

“Huzzay!” was the rapturous acclaim. “They do not talk through rebel noses!”

“Huzzay! It is English they speak, not Wigwamee!”

“Huzzay! The squaw is as beautiful as our Fairest, and painted red and white by cunning

Nature, not daubed with ochres. Huzzay! the young sagamore is an Adonis. He beats Chesterfield at a bow and Selwyn at a *mot*."

Mrs. Brothertoft grew proud of her husband, and grateful to him that he had chastened her Billow manners.

What a brilliant visit that was!

All the liberal statesmen — Pitt, Henry Fox, Conway, mellifluous Murray — were glad to do the young American honor.

Rugged Dr. Sam Johnson belabored him with sesquipedalian words, but in a friendly way and without bullying. He could be a good old boy, if he pleased, with good young ones.

Young Mr. Burke was gratified that his friend from a sublime and beautiful hemisphere appreciated the new treatise on the Sublime and Beautiful.

Young Mr. Joshua Reynolds was flattered that the distinguished stranger consented to sit to him, and in return tried to flatter the portrait.

Young Dr. Oliver Goldsmith, a poor Bohemian, smattered in music and medicine, came to inquire whether a clever man, out of place, could find his niche in America.

Mr. Garrick, playing Ranger, quite lost his self-possession when Mrs. Brothertoft first brought her flashing black eyes and glowing cheeks into the theatre, and only recovered when the audi-

ence perceived the emotion and cheered it and the lady together.

That great dilettante, Mr. Horace Walpole, made the pair a charming *déjeuner* at Strawberry Hill, upon which occasion he read aloud, with much cadence, — as dilettante gentlemen continue to do in our own time, — his friend Mr. Gray's elaborate Elegy in a Country Churchyard, just printed. After this literary treat, Mr. Horace said: "Tell me something about that clever young aide-de-camp, Washington, who got Iroquois Braddock the privilege of dying in his scalp. A brave fellow that! an honor to your country, sir." Mr. Gerge Selwyn, the wit, was also a guest. He looked maliciously out of his "demure eyes," and said: "You forget, Horry, that you used to name Major Washington 'a fanfaron,' and laugh at him for calling the whiz of cannon-balls 'a delightful sound.'" Whereupon the host, a little abashed, laughed, and said: "I wish such 'fanfarons' were more plenty in the army." And the sparkling gossip did not relate how he had put this nickname in black and white in a letter to Sir Horace Mann, in whose correspondence it may still be read, with abundance of other second-hand jokes.

What a gay visit it was of the young pair in that brilliant moment of England!

While Brothertoft, in the intervals of urging

his Petition and Remonstrance, discussed all the sublime and beautiful things that are dreamt of in philosophy with Mr. Burke,— while he talked Art with Mr. Reynolds, poetry with Dr. Goldsmith, and *de omnibus rebus* with Dr. Johnson,— his wife was holding a little court of her own.

She was a new sensation, with her bold, wilful beauty and her imperious Americanism. A new sensation, and quite annihilated all the traditions of Mary Wortley Montagu and her Turkish dress, when she appeared at a masquerade as Pocahontas, in a fringed and quilled buckskin robe, moccasons, and otter coronet with an eagle's plume.

"I suppose that's a scalping-knife she's playing with," said the Duke of Gуроуе, inspecting her in this attire. "And, by George, she looks as if she could use it."

Then the ugly old monster, and the other *blasé* men, surrounded the Colonial beauty, and fooled her with flattery.

Was she spoilt by this adulation?

"Dear Edwin," she schemed, in a little visit they made to Lincolnshire and the ruins of old Brothertoft Manor, "let us buy back this estate and never return to that raw America. You can go into Parliament, make one or two of your beautiful speeches, and presently be a Peer, with stars and garters."

“ Does a garter straighten a leg ? does a star ennable a heart ? Listen, my love, do you not hear Great Tom of Lincoln warning me, as he long ago warned my ancestor, ‘ Go home again, Brothertoft, Liberty is in danger ’ ? ”

“ No,” she rejoined, petulantly ; “ a loyal bell would not utter such treasonable notes. This is what I hear : ‘ Come again, Brothertoft, Lord of the old Manor ! ’ Liberty ! Liberty ! You tire me with your idle fancies. Why will you throw away name and fame ? ”

“ I will try to gain them, since they are precious to you ; but they must come in the way of duty.”

There was peril in these ambitions of hers ; but the visionary husband thought, “ How can I wonder that her head is a little turned with adulation ? She merits it all, my beautiful wife ! But she will presently get the court glare out of her eyes. When our child is born, a pledge of our restored affection, she will recognize deeper and tenderer duties.”

The Brothertoft embassy was a social success, but a political failure.

The lewd old dolt of a King sulkily pooh-poohed Remonstrance and Petition.

“ You ought to have redress,” says Pitt, “ but I am hardly warm in my seat of Prime Minister. I can only be a tacit friend at present.”

“ Go home and wait,” says Ben Franklin, a shrewd old Boston-boy,—fond of tricks with kites, keys, and kerchiefs,—who was at that time resident in London. “ Wait awhile! I have not been fingering thunderbolts so long, without learning that people may pooh-pooh at the clouds, and say the flashes are only heat-lightning; but by and by they ’ll be calling upon the cellars to take ’em in, and the feather-beds to cover ’em.”

The Brothertofts went home. England forgot them, and relapsed into its belief,—

That on the new continent the English colonists could not remain even half-civilized Yen-geese, but sank to absolute Yankees,—

Whose bows were contortions, and smiles grimaces;

Whose language was a nasal whoop of Anglo-Iroquois;

And who needed to be bolused with Stamp Acts and drenched with Tea Duties, while Tom Gage and Jack Burgoyne pried open their teeth with the sword.

There was one visible, tangible, ponderable result of the Brothertofts’ visit to England.

Lucy Brothertoft, an only child, was born,—a token of love revived,—alas! a monument of love revived to die and be dismissed among memories.

If the wife had been a true wife, how sweetly

her affection for her husband would have redoubled for him in his new relation of father. Here was a cradle for rendezvous. Why not clasp hands and renew vows across it? This smiling, sinless child, — why could it not recall to either parent's face a smile of trust and love?

But this bliss was not to be.

Ring sadly, bells of Trinity! It is the christening day. Alas! the chimes that welcome the daughter to the bosom of the church are tolling the knell of love in the household where she will grow to womanhood.

The harmonious interlude ended. The old, old story went on. Slowly, slowly, slowly, the wife grew to hate her husband. Sadly, sadly, sadly, he learned to only pity her.

The visit to England had only more completely enamored her of worldliness. She missed the adulation of My Lord and Sir Harry. Her husband's love and approval ceased to be sufficient for her. And when this is said, all is said.

It was a refinement of cruelty in the torture days to bind a living man to a corpse. Dead lips on living lips. Lumpish heart at throbbing heart. Glazed eyes so close that their stare could be felt, not seen, by eyes set in horror. Death grappling, and Life wrestling itself to Death. Have we never seen this, now that the

days of bodily torture are over? Have we seen no delicate spirit of a woman quelled by the embraces of a brute? Have we seen no high and gentle-hearted man bound to a coarse, base wife, and slain by that body of death?

The world, the oyster, sulked when the young man it had so generously gaped for quite lost his appetite for fat things.

“Shame!” said the indignant Province. “We had unanimously voted Edwin Brothertoft our representative gentleman. He was ardent and visionary, and we forgave him. He was mellifluous, grammatical, ornamental, and we petted him. We were a little plebeian, and needed an utterly brave young aristocrat to carry our oriflamme, and we thrust the staff into his hand. Shame, Brothertoft! you have gulled us. It is the old story,—premature blossom, premature decay. The hare sleeps. The tortoise swallows the prize! To the front, ye plodders, slow, but sure! And you, broken-down Brothertoft, retire to the back streets! wear the old clothes! and thank your stars, if we consent to pay you even a starvation salary!”

“Poor Jane Billop!” said Julia Peartree Smith, who was now very intimate with that lady. “I always said it would be so. I knew she would come to disappointment and grief. The Brothertofts were always weak as water.

And this mercenary fellow hurried her into marriage, a mere child, after an engagement a few weeks. No wonder she despises him. do, heartily. What lovely lace this is. I wonder if she could n't give me another yar Heigh ho ! Nobody smuggles for me ! ”

Brother patriots, too, had their opinion the subject of Brothertoft's withdrawal into obscurity.

“ These delicate, poetical natures,” said our old friend, Patroon Livingston, “ feel very keenly the blight of political enslavement. Well may a leader droop, when his comrades skulk ! I tell you, gentlemen, that it is our non-committal policy which has disheartened our friend. When we dare to stand by him, and say, ‘ Liberty or death ! ’ the man will be a man again,—yes, a better man than the best of us. I long to see his eye kindle, and hear his voice ring again. I love a gentleman, when he is man enough to be free.”

But whoever could have looked into this weary heart would have read there a sadder story than premature decay, a deadlier blight than political enslavement, a crueler and closer wrong than the desertion of comrades.

Wrong ! it had come to that,—the final wrong between man and woman,—the catastrophe of the first act of the old, old tragedy.

These pages do not tolerate the details of this bitter wrong.

The mere facts of guilt are of little value except to the gossip and the tipstaff; but how the wounded and the wounding soul bear themselves after the crime, that is one of the needful lessons of life.

IX.

RED.

That was the color now master in Mrs. Brothertoft's houses, town and country.

Supercilious officers, in red coats, who were addressed as General or My Lord, insolent officers, in red coats, hight Colonel or Sir Harry, arranged their laced cravats at the mirror under the rampant eagle, or lounged on the sofas.

There were plenty of such personages now in New York, and Mrs. Brothertoft's house made them all welcome. Regimental talk, the dullest and thinnest of all the shop talks talked among men, was the staple of conversation over her Madeira at her dinners, grand, or *en famille, bien entendu*.

Now and then a nasal patriot from Down East, or a patriot Thee-and-Thouer from Philadelphia, knocked at the door and inquired for Mr. Brothertoft.

“Out of town, Sir,” was the reply of the wiggy negro.

“ When do you expect him back ? ”

“ Don’t know, Sir,” the porter replied, rather sadly.

The patriot retired, and the negro closed the door with a sigh,— the pompous sigh of an old family servant.

“ No,” muttered he, “ I don’t know when he’ll be back. He never would come back if he knew about the goings on in this house. He never would anyhow, if it was n’t to look after Miss Lucy. There she comes down stairs, I ’ll ask her. Miss Lucy ! ”

A gentle, graceful little girl, of the Brothertoft type, turned at the foot of the stairs and answered, “ What, Voltaire ? ”

“ Do you know, Miss, where your father is, now ? ”

“ No,” she replied, half sadly, half coldly.

“ A gentleman was just asking when he would be back.”

“ He does not inform us of his motions.”

She seemed to shrink from the subject, as if there were guilt in touching it.

Voltaire looked forlornly after her, as she passed into the parlor. Then he shook his fist indignantly at a great palmated pair of moose-horns, mounted as a hat-stand in the hall. On the right-brow antler hung a military cocked

hat. On the left bezantler, a pert little fatigue cap was suspended.

“It’s too bad,” Voltaire began.

Black babble has become rather a bore in literature. Voltaire, therefore, will try not to talk Tombigbee.

“It’s too bad,” muttered the negro, in futile protest, “to see them fellows hanging up their hats here, and the real master—the real gentleman—shamed out of house and home.

“It’s too bad,” he continued despondingly, “to see Miss Lucy, as sweet a little lady as ever stepped, taught to think her father a good-for-nothing spendthrift and idler, if not worse. The madam will never let her see him alone. The poor child is one of the kind that believes what is told to ‘em. No wonder she is solemn as Sunday all the time. I don’t see anything to be done. But I’ll go down and ask Sappho.”

Again he shook his fist at those enormous excrescences from the brow of a bold *Cervus alces*,—a moose that once walked the Highlands near Brothertoft Manor. Then he shambled down stairs to his wife Sappho’s boudoir, the kitchen.

Blacker than Sappho of Lesbos ever looked when Phaon cried, *Avaunt!* was this namesake of the female Sam Patch of Leucadia. But through her eyes and mouth good-humor shone,

as the jolly fire shines through the chinks of the black furnace-doors under a boiler.

“Things goes wrong in this house, all but your cooking department, Sappho, and my butler department,” says Voltaire. “The master is shamed away, and is off propergating liberty. The mistress,—I suppose we ’d better not say nothing about her.”

Sappho shook her head, and stirred her soup.

“But Miss Lucy is going to be a big girl pretty soon. Her mother is making her mistrust her father. She ’s got no friends. What will come of her ?”

Sappho tasted her soup. It was savory.

“Voltaire,” says she, striving to talk a dialect worthy of her name, and hitting half-way to English, “Voltaire, Faith is what you wants. You is not got the Faith of a free colored gentleman, member of one of de oldest families in all Westchester. You is got no more Faith than them Mumbo Jumbo Billop niggers what immigrated in the Red Rover. You jess let de Lord look after Miss Lucy. She is one after de Lord’s own heart.”

“But the Devil has put his huf into this house.”

“If you was a cook, you ’d have more Faith. Jest you taste that soup now. How is it ?”

“Prime,” says Voltaire, blowing and sipping.

“ You taste it, Plato,” she repeated, dipping another ladle from the pot, and offering to her son, heir of his father’s philosophic dignity, and his mother’s Socratic visage. “ How is it ? ”

“ Prime ! ” says this second connoisseur.

“ Now, what you guess is the most important-est thing in this soup ? ”

“ Conundrums is vulgar, particular for ladies,” says Voltaire, loftily.

“ That’s because you can’t guess.”

“ Poh ! it’s easy enough,” says he. “ Beef ! ”

“ No. You guess, Plato.”

“ B’ilin’ water,” cries he, sure of his solution. Sappho shook her head.

“ Turkey carcasses,” propounded Voltaire, with excitement.

“ Onions,” offered Plato, with eagerness.

“ No,” says Sappho, “ it’s Faith ! ”

“ I was jest a goin’ to say Faith,” Plato un-blushingly asserted.

“ You see,” Sappho explained, “ I takes beef, — bery well ! and b’ilin’ water, — bery well ! and turkey carcasses, and onions, and heaps of things, and puts ’em into a pot on the fire. Then I has Faith.”

“ Poh ! ” cried Voltaire. “ ’T was n’t a fair conundrum ; you has the Faith into yourself.”

“ Then I takes Faith,” repeated Sappho, without noticing this interruption, “ Faith, that these

'gredients which is not soup is comin' soup in de Lord's time, an dey alluz comes soup."

"And the primest kind!" Plato interjected, authoritatively.

"So," continued Sappho, improving the lesson, "soup and roast geese, and pies and pancakes risin' over night, has taught me disyer proverb, 'Wait, and things comes out right at last.' So it 's boun' to be with Miss Lucy."

This logic convinced the two namesakes of philosophers, and they carried up dinner, in a perplexed but patient mood.

My Lord and Sir Harry were both dining there that day.

"Do you know what has become of our hostess's husband?" asked My Lord, as they lounged off after dinner.

"He 's going about the Provinces, stirring up rebellion after a feeble fashion," said Sir Harry. "I believe that fellow Gaine pays him a few shillings a week for editing his 'Mercury,' when he is in New York."

"If I was Governor Tryon I'd have that dirty sheet stopped. He 's a new broom. He ought to make a clean sweep of all these Freedom Shriekers."

Such then was the condition of things in the Brothertoft family at the beginning of Tryon's administration.

Edwin Brothertoft had not become an absolute stranger to his old home, for two reasons. He pitied his guilty wife. He loved his innocent daughter. He could not quite give up the hope that his wife might need his pardon, by and by, when sin soured to her taste. He must never totally abandon his child to the debasing influences about her, though he had no power or influence to rescue her now,—that disheartened and broken-down man, contemned by the world as a purposeless idler.

Matters had not reached this pass in one year nor until many years,—dreary to imagine, far too dreary to describe.

Who shall enumerate the daily miseries in that hapless house? Who shall count the cruel little scratches of the poniard, with which the wife practised for her final stab? What Recording Angel kept tally of the method she took to murder his peace, that he might know it was murdered, dead, dead, dead, and not exasperate her with his patient hope that it might recover?

Her fortune gave her one weapon,—a savage one in those vulgar hands. She used this power insolently, as baser spirits may. She would have been happy to believe, what she pretended, that her husband married her for money. Often she told him so. Often she reproached him with her own disappointment.

“Did I marry you,” she would say, “to be inefficient and obscure,—a mere nobody in the world? You were to be a great man,—that was your part of the bargain. You knew I was ambitious. I had a right to be. You have had everything to give you success,—everything!”

“Not quite everything,” he said sadly. “Not Love!”

Ah miserable woman! as she grew practised in deceit and wrong, she hated her husband more and more.

She maddened herself against him. She blamed him as the cause of her evil choices.

“It is his fault, not mine,” she said to herself. “He ought to have controlled me, and then I should not have done what makes me ashamed to face his puny face. He ought to have said, ‘You shall and you shall not,’ instead of his feeble, ‘Is this wise, Jane? Is this delicate? Is this according to your nobler nature?’ I don’t like to be pleaded with. A despot was what I needed. If he was half a man, he would take a whip to me,—yes, beat me, and kick all my friends out of doors and be master in the house. That I could understand.”

She maddened herself against him more and more. She so yielded to an insolent hate, that she was no better than a mad woman while he was by to enrage her with his patient, crushed,

and yet always courteous demeanor,—a sorrowful shadow of the ardent, chivalric Edwin Brothertoft of yore.

“ Why not kill the craven-spirited wretch ? ” she thought, “ or have him killed ? He would be better dead, than living and scorned ? Once rid of him, and I could take my beauty and my wealth to England, and be a grand lady after all. Lady Brothertoft of Brothertoft Hall ! that was what I had a right to expect. He could have given it to me. The fool was capable enough. Everybody said he might be what he pleased. Why could he not love real things ? a splendid house, plenty of slaves, a name, a title, instead of this ridiculous dream of Liberty. Liberty ! if he and his weak-minded friends only dared strike a blow,—if they only would rebel,—he might be got rid of. Then I should be free. Ah, I will have my triumphs yet ! Kings have loved women not half so handsome ! ”

And with red, unblushing cheeks she looked at herself in the mirror, and hated that obstruction, her husband, more and more.

A mad hate, which she would gladly have gratified with murder. The air often seemed to her full of Furies, scourging her on to do the deed. Furies flitted before her, proffering palpable weapons,—weapons always of strange and antique fashion, such as she had seen and han-

dled in old museums in England. She remembered now with what pleasure she used to play with them, while she listened quietly to some sinister legend, and knew how the stain came on the blade.

“Kill him!” the Furies cried to her. It was a sound like the faint, distant cry one hears in a benighted forest, and wonders whether the creature be beast or man.

“Not yet,” she answered, aloud, to this hail in the far background of her purposes.

The postponement seemed to imply a promise, and she perceived the circle of shadowy Furies draw a little step nearer, and shout to each other in triumph, “‘Not yet’; she says, ‘Not yet.’”

So her hate grew more and more akin to a madness, as every cruel or base passion, even the silliest and most trifling, will, if fondled.

She found, by and by, that the cruellest stab she could give to the man she had wronged was through his daughter.

“Lucy is all Brothertoft, and no Billop,” Julia Peartree Smith often said. “It’s all wrong; she ought to take after her strong parent, not her weak one.”

There was a kind of strength incomprehensible to the old tabby. Nor did she know the law of the transmission of spiritual traits,—with what

fine subtlety they get themselves propagated, and prevail over coarser and cruder forces.

Lucy *was* all Brothertoft. In her early days she did not show one atom of the maternal character. That made the mother's influence more commanding. The child loved the mother with a modification of the same passion that the father had felt for a nature he deemed his nobler counterpart. The father was so much like his daughter that she could not comprehend him, until she was ripe enough to comprehend herself. Crude contrasts are earliest perceived, earliest appreciated, and earliest admired, in character as in art.

So without any resistance Mrs. Brothertoft wielded Lucy. She let the child love her and confide in her exclusively. But she hated her. She hated Edwin Brothertoft's daughter. There was the girl growing more and more like him, day by day. There were the father's smile, the father's manner, the father's voice, even the father's very expressions of endearment, forever reproaching the mother with old memories revived.

Ah this miserable woman ! She learnt to fear her daughter,—to dread the inevitable day when that pure nature would recoil from hers. She watched the gentle face covertly. When would that look of almost lover-like admiration depart ?

When would disgust be visible ? When would the mild hazel eyes perceive that the bold black eyes could not meet them ? When would the fair cheeks burn with an agonizing blush of shame ?

“ When will the girl dare to pity me, as that poor wretch her father does ? ” she thought.

This gentle, yielding, timid creature became her mother’s angel of vengeance. Mrs. Brothertoft never met her after an hour of separation without a wild emotion of terror.

“ Has she discovered ? Does she know what I am ? Did some tattler whisper it to her in the street ? The winds are always uttering a name to me. Has she heard it, too ? Did she dream last night ? Has her dream told her what her mother is ? If she kisses me, I am safe.”

Yes. Sweet Lucy always had the same eager caress ready. She so overflowed with love to those she trusted, that she was content with her own emotion, and did not measure the temperature of the answering caress.

Ah this miserable mother ! as false to maternal as to marital love. It became her task to poison the daughter against her father. If these two should ever understand each other, if there should ever be one little whisper of confidence between them, if she should ever have to face the thought of their contempt, — what then ?

Agony would not let her think, “What then?” She must prevent the understanding, make the confidence impossible; it must be her business to educate and aim the contempt.

How perseveringly, craftily, ably she accomplished this! How slowly she instilled into her child’s mind the cumulative poison of distrust. Often the innocent lips shrank from the bitter potion. One day she might reject it. But the next, there was the skilful poisoner,—her mother.

“You cannot doubt me, Lucy,” the woman would say, looking aside as she commended her chalice. “If it distresses you to hear such things of your father, how much bitterer must it be for me to say them!”

These pages again refuse to tolerate the details of this second crime. Let that too pass behind the curtain.

Closed doors then! for the mother is at last saying that her husband has grown baser and baser,—so utterly lost to all sense of honor that she must exclude him from her house, and that her daughter must herself tell him that she will never see him again.

Closed doors, while the innocent girl flings herself into the guilty woman’s arms, and, weeping, promises to obey.

Closed doors, and only God to see and listen,

while Lucy, alone in her chamber, prays forgiveness for her father, and pity for his desolate and heart-weary child.

Closed doors upon the picture of this fair girl, worn out with agony and asleep. And walking through her dreams that grisly spectre Sin, who haunts and harms the nights and days of those who repel, hardly less cruelly than he haunts and harms them who embrace him.

It was a tearful April morning of 1775, when this final interview took place.

“Let me understand this,” said Edwin Brothertoft, with the calmness of a practised sufferer. “My daughter has made up her mind never to see me again?”

“She has,” said Mrs. Brothertoft.

With what quiet, cruel exultation she spoke these words! Exultation mixed with terror for the thought, “I have schooled the girl. But she may still rebel. She may spring to him, and throw herself into his arms, and then the two will turn upon me, and point with their fingers, and triumph.”

“I cannot take my answer from you, madam,” he said.

“I have no other answer to give,” said Lucy.

“None?” he asked again.

“None,” she replied.

Her coldness was the result of utter bewilderment and exhaustion. It seemed to him irremediable hardness and coarseness of heart.

“She is her bad mother’s base daughter,” he thought. “I will think of her no more.”

Does this seem unnatural? Remember how easily a lesser faith is slain, when the first great faith has perished. The person trusted with the whole heart proves a Lie; then for a time all persons seem liars; then for a time the deceived, if they are selfish, go cynical; if they are generous, they give their faith to great causes, to great ideas, and to impersonal multitudes. Household treachery keeps the great army of Reform recruited.

“This girl,” thought Edwin Brothertoft, “cannot be so blind as not to know why her mother and I are separated. And yet she chooses her, and discards me. I knew that the woman once my wife could never be my wife again. I knew that our lips could never meet, our hands never touch. But I hoped — yes, I was weak enough to hope — that, when sin and sorrow had taught us their lessons, and the day for repentance and pardon came, we might approach each other in the person of our daughter, beloved by both alike. I was father and my wife mother in the honorable days gone by. Our child might teach the father and the mother a different love, not of

the flesh, but of the spirit. This was my hope. I let it go. Why should I longer keep up this feeble struggle with these base people, who have ruined my life? I have no daughter. I never had a wife. I forget the past. God forgive me if I abandon a duty! God give me opportunity, if he wills that I ever resume it again!"

As he walked up Wall Street, moodily reflecting after this fashion, he heard a voice call him.

"Mr. Brothertoft!"

This hail came from the nose of a hurried person who had just turned the corner of Smith — now William — Street, and was making for the wife's house, when he saw the husband.

"Mr. Brothertoft!" twanged sharp after the retreating figure. There was an odd mixture of alarm and triumph in these nasal notes.

"Call me by some other name!" said the one addressed, turning. "What you please, but never that again."

"Waal!" says the other, speaking Bostonee, through a nose high Boston, "you might n't like my taste in baptism, so I 'll call you Cap'n,— that 's safe. Cap'n," he continued in a thrilling whisper, through that hautboy he played on, "Cap'n, we've shed and drawed the fust blood fur Independence. Aperel 19 wuz the day. Lexington wuz wher we shed. Corncud wuz

wher we drawed. Naow, if you'll jest pint and poot fur Bosting, you 'll pint and poot fur a locality wher considdable phlebotomy is ter be expected baout these times, and wher Patriots is wanted jest as fast as they can pile in."

Clang out your alarums, bells of Trinity! others may need awakening. Not he who was named Edwin Brothertoft. He is gone already to fight in the old, old battle—forever old, forever new—of freedom against tyranny, of the new thoughts against the old facts.

"So your husband 's on his way to get himself shot or hung. And a good riddance, I suppose, Madam B.," said coarse Sir Harry.

"The beautiful widow will not cry her eyes out," said My Lord with his usual sneer.

Mrs. Brothertoft writhed a little under this familiarity.

Like many another, who says, "*Deteriora sequar*," she wished to go to the bad with a stately step and queenly mien. That is not permitted by the eternal laws. Ah, miserable woman! she was taught to feel how much the gentleman she had betrayed was above the coarse associates she had chosen.

She missed him, now that he was gone irreversibly.

Had there been then in her heart any relics of the old love? Had she cherished some vague

purpose of repentance, some thought of tears, some hope of pardon?

Had her torture of her husband been only a penance for herself? Was it the hate which is so akin to love? Could this be a self-hatred for a self that has wasted the power of loving,—a hate that is forever wreaking vengeance for this sad loss upon the object the heart most longs to love,—the only one that can remind that heart of its impotency? Had she been acting unconsciously by the laws of such a passion?

And this exasperating influence banished, would she have peace at last? Would the Furies let her alone? Would the hints of murder vanish and be still? Would she be a free woman, now, to follow out her purposes?

Edwin Brothertoft had disappeared. Deserters from the rebel army could give no news of such a person.

Julia Peartree Smith often suggested to her friend the welcome thought that he was dead.

Mrs. Brothertoft could not believe it. Something whispered her that there would be another act in the drama of her married life.

PART II.

I.

BUFF and Blue.

Dear, faithful old colors! They never appeared more brave and trusty than in Major Skerrett's coat,—a coat of 1777.

“White at the seams of the blue, soiled at the edges of the buff,” said the Major, inspecting himself in a triangular bit of looking-glass. “I must have a new one, if I can find a tailor who will take an order on the Goddess of Liberty in pay. Good morning, Mrs. Birdsell.”

This salutation he gave as he passed out of the little house in Fishkill where he had been quartered last night.

“Good mornin’, Sir,” returned Mrs. Birdsell, rushing out of her kitchen, with a rolling-pin in hand, and leaving her pie-crust flat on its back, all dotted with dabs of butter, as an ermine cape is with little black tails.

She looked after him, as he stepped out into the village street. Her first emotion was feminine admiration,—her second, feminine curiosity.

“ What a beautiful young man ! ” she said to her respectable self. “ Sech legs ! Sech hair, — jest the color of ripe chesnut burrs, — only I don’t like that streak of it on his upper lip. I’ve olluz understood from Deacons that the baird of a man cum in with Adam’s fall and waz to be shaved off. Naow I’d give a hul pie to know what Ginaler Washington’s sent him on here for. It’s the greatest kind of a pity he did n’t come a few days before. That old granny, Ginaler Putnam, would n’t hev let Sirr Henery Clinton grab them forts down to the Highlands, if he’d hed sech a young man as this to look arter him and spry him up.”

Before he continued his walk, Major Skerrett paused a moment for a long hearty draught of new October,—new American, a finer tipple than old English October.

Finer and cheaper ! In fact it was on free tap.

No cask to bore. No spigot to turn. No pewter pot to fill. Major Skerrett had but to open his mouth and breathe. He inhaled, and he had swallowed Science knows how many quarts of that mellow golden nectar, the air of an American October morning. It was the perfection of potables,—as much so then in 1777, as it is now in 1860.

“ I have seen the lands of many men, and drained their taps,” soliloquized the Major, paro-

dying the *Odyssey*; “but never, in the bottle or out of the bottle, tasted I such divine stuff as this. O lilies and roses, what a bouquet! O peaches and pippins, what a flavor! O hickory-nuts and chinkapins, what an aroma! More, Hebe, more! Let me swig!—forgive the word! But one *drinks* pints; and I want gallons, puncheons.”

While he is indulging in this harmless debauch, let Mrs. Birdsell’s question, “What did General Washington send him on for?” be answered.

“Peter,” said Washington familiarly to Major Skerrett, his aide-de-camp, “I have written peremptorily several times to General Putnam to send me reinforcements. They do not come.”

The chief was evidently somewhat in the dumps there at his camp, near Pennibecker’s Mill, on the Perkiomy Creek, twenty miles from Philadelphia, at the end of September, 1777.

“I suppose,” the Major suggested, “that Putnam cannot get out of his head his idle scheme for the recapture of New York,—that ‘suicidal parade,’ as Aleck Hamilton calls it.”

“I must have the men. Our miserable business of the Brandywine must be done over.”

“Yes; Sir William Howe is bored enough in Philadelphia by this time. Everybody always is there. It would be only the courtesy of war

to challenge him out, and then beat him away to jollier quarters."

"I do not like to challenge him unless I have a couple of thousand more men. You must take a little ride, Major, up to Old Put at Peekskill, and see that they start."

"The soldier obeys. But he sighs that he may miss a battle or an adventure."

"Adventures sprout under the heels of knights-errant like you, Peter. Peekskill is not many miles away from the spot of one of *my* young romances."

The noble old boy paused an instant, sentimental with the recollection of handsome Mary Phillipse and nineteen years ago.

"The men will come like drawing teeth," he resumed. "Old Put is — what was that Latin phrase you used about him to Lafayette the other day ? "

"Tenax propositi," Skerrett replied.

"Anglice, obstinate as a mule. Ah, Skerrett! we poor land-surveyors, that had to lug levels and compasses through the woods, know little Latin and less Greek. But there was more of your quotation, to express the valuable side of Putnam's character."

"*Nec vultus instantis tyranni, Mente quatit solida,*" quoted the Major; and then translated impromptu, "Never a scowl, o'er tyrant's jowl, His stiff old heart can shake."

Washington laughed. Skerrett laughed louder. He was at that ebullient age when life is letting off its overcharge of laughter. Young fellows at that period are a bore or an exhilaration ;— a bore, to say the least, if their animal spirits are brutal spirits,— no bore, even if not quite the ripest company, provided their glee does not degenerate into uproar.

“ I don’t know what I should do, Peter, in these dark times, without your irrepressible good spirits,” said the chief. “ My boys — you and Hamilton and Lafayette and Harry Lee — keep me up. I get tired to death of the despondencies and prejudices and jealousies of some of these old women in breeches who wear swords or cast votes.”

“ Perhaps you cannot spare me then to go to Peekskill,” the Major said, slyly.

His Country’s Father smiled. “ Be off, my boy ; but don’t stay too long. Your head will be worth more to Old Put than a regiment. He’s growing old. He shows the effects of tough campaigning in his youth. Besides, keeping a tavern was not the best business for a man of his convivial habits.”

“ We youngsters found that out at the siege of Boston, when you, General, were keeping your head cool on baked apples and milk.”

“ I ate ‘em because I liked ‘em, my boy. My head keeps itself cool. By the way, you will be

able to help General Putnam with that hot-tempered La Radière. The old gentleman never can forget how the Frenchmen and their Indians mangled him in Canada in '58."

"He never can let anybody else forget it. I would give odds that he 'll offer to tell that story before I 've been with him fifteen minutes."

"Well, good bye! Hurry on the regulars! Let him call in the militia in their places! Tell him he *must* hold the Highlands! If he cannot keep Sir Henry Clinton back until Gates takes Jack Burgoyne, you and I, Peter, will have to paint ourselves vermillion and join the Tuscaroras."

After such a talk with our chief,—who was not the stilted prig that modern muffs have made him,—Major Skerrett departed on his mission. He left head-quarters a few days before that hit-and-miss battle of Germantown.

Skerrett was young and a hard rider. He lamed his horse the first day. He lost time in getting another. It was the evening of October eighth, when, as he approached the North River to cross to Peekskill, the country people warned him back with the news that on the sixth Sir Henry Clinton had taken the Highland forts, and Putnam had run away to Fishkill.

"Black news!" thought Skerrett. "General Washington will turn Tuscarora now, if ever."

Skerrett made a circuit northward, crossed the Hudson at Newburgh, and reported to General Putnam, October 9, sunset, at the Van Wyck farm-house, on the plain, half a mile north of the Fishkill Mountains. The heights rose in front, a rampart a thousand feet high.

Old Put limped out to meet Washington's aide-de-camp. He was a battered veteran, lame with a fractured thigh, stiff with coming paralysis and now despondent after recent blunders.

"Dusky times, Skerrett," says he, forlornly. "I suppose the Chief sent you for men. He's a cannibal after human flesh. But don't worry me to-night. To-morrow we're to have a Council of War, and I'll see what can be done. I suppose you know what's happened."

"Yes,—generally."

"Well; it's all clear for Clinton to go up and join that mountebank, Jack Burgoyne. I might just as well go home, and set up tahvern again to Pomfret for anything I can do here. God save the King is going to make Yankee Doodle sing small from yesterday on. It was all the fault of that cursed fog,—we had a fog, thick as mush, all day on the sixth. I believe them British ships brought it with 'em in bags, from the Channel. They chocked up the river with their fog, and while I was waitin' for 'em over to Peekskill, they crep across and took the forts. Darn it all!"

Putnam paused to take an indignant breath. Skerrett smiled at the old hero's manner. When he was excited, the Yankeeisms of his youth came back to him. His lisp also grew more decided. Nobody knows whether the lisp was natural, or artificial, and caused by a jaw-breaker with the butt of a musket he got from an uncivil Gaul at Fort Ti in '58. His Yankeeisms, his lisp, his drollery, his muddy schemes, made the jolly old boy the chief comic character of our early Revolutionary days.

"How Jack Burgoyne will stick out that great under-lip of his,—the ugly pelican!" continued old Put, "when he hears of this. He 'll stop fightin', while he goes at his proper trade, and writes a farce with a Yankee in it, who 'll never say anything but, 'I veouw! By dollars, we 're chawed up!'"

"Don't you remember, General," says Skerrett, "how Bunker Hill interrupted the acting of a farce of his? Perhaps Gates will make him pout his lip, as he did when he saw you pointing the old mortar Congress at him and Boston from Prospect Hill. Don't you recollect? We saw him with a spy-glass, and you said he looked like a pelican with a mullet in his pouch. By the way, where did you ever see pelicans?"

"When I was down to take Cuba in '62, and we didn't take it. I'll tell you the story when

I feel brighter. We were wrecked, and had not a thing but pelicans to eat for two days,—and fishy grub they are!"

"Well, we must not despair," says Skerrett, cheerily, seeing that the old brave began to brighten.

"Dethpair?" lisped Putnam, "who's a goin' to despair? I tell you, my boy, you'll eat a Connecticut punkin-pie with me, yet, in peace and Pomfret. I wish we had one now, for supper."

"There's raw material enough about," Skerrett said, glancing at the piles of that pomaceous berry which wallowed among the corn shocks and smiled at the sugary sunset.

"Yes; but this is York State, and punkin-pies off their native Connecticut soil are always a mushy mess, or else tough as buckskin. Never mind, my boy, we'll sit every man under his own corn-stalk, on his own squash, and whistle Yankee Doodle and call it macaroni, yet. It don't look half so dark to me now as it did in the Ti-conderogy times. Did I ever tell you the story how the Frenchmen and their cussed Indians mauled me there?"

"It's coming. I knew it would," thought Peter, at the beginning of this sentence, "and I did not bring any cotton to plug my ears!"

"Well," continued Put, without waiting for

his companion's answer, "I shall have to tell my tale another time, for here comes my orderly, with papers to sign. You remember Sergeant Lincoln, don't you, Skerrett?"

"I should not remember much in this world, if he had not saved my life and my memory for me. Shall I tell you *my* story, short? Scene I. Bunker Hill. A British beggar with a baggonet makes a point at Peter Skerrett's rebel buttons on his left breast. Rebel Sergeant Lincoln twigs, describes a circle with a musket's butt. Scene II. Bunker Hill. A British beggar on his back sees stars and points upward with his baggonet at those brass buttons on the blue sky. In the distance two pairs of heels are seen,—these," says Peter, lifting his own, "and yours, Sergeant Lincoln. And that's what I call a model story."

"*Ne quid nimis*, certainly. Not a word to spare, Sir," says the Sergeant, taking Peter's proffered hand.

He was a slender, quiet, elderly man. Perhaps prematurely aged by care or campaigning or a wound, rather than old. He handed his papers to the General, and withdrew.

"I guess I've got the only orderly in the Continental Army that can talk Latin," says Put, proud as if this possession made a Julius Cæsar of himself. "Lincoln must have been a schoolmaster before he 'listed.'"

"There 's no flavor of birch about him," Skerrett rejoined. "Perhaps he stepped out of a pulpit to take the sword."

"He don't handle the sword very kindly. He 's brave enough."

"But not bloody," interjected Peter.

"No. There 's men enough that can squint along a barrel, and drop a redcoat, and sing out, 'Hooray! another bully gone!' — but not many, like my orderly, that can tell you why a redcoat has got to be a bully, and why we 're doing our duty to God and man by a droppin' on 'em. I tell you, he in the ranks to keep up the men's sperits is wuth more than generals I could name with big applelettes on their backs."

"Is that the reason why he stays in the ranks, and does not ask for epaulettes?"

"He might have had them long ago ; but he 's shy of standing up for himself. I guess he 's some time or other ben wowned in his mind, and all the impudence has run out at the wownd."

"Liberty, preserve me from such phlebotomy!" devoutly ejaculated Peter. "But has the Sergeant been with you all this time?"

"With my division. But I did not have him with me in Westchester. I stationed him here to look after the stores, and put recruits through the motions. Now, Major, I must look at these papers. Come to the Council of War to-morrow,

and give us a good word. We shall want all we can get. The news gets worse and worse. This very morning General Tryon — spiteful dog — has been marauding this side of Peekskill, and burning up a poor devil of a village at the lower edge of the Highlands."

"Arson is shabby warfare," said Peter, taking leave.

III.

It was in the Skerrett blood to come out red
at a pinch.

“Things do look a little dusky for the good cause,” thought Skerrett, as, wearing his buff and blue coat,—far too dull a coat for so bright a fellow,—he stood drinking October next morning, as we have seen him, before Mrs. Birdsell’s cottage.

“The Liberty-tree is a little nipped,” he continued. “I suppose all the worm-eaten people will drop off now. Let ’em go! and be food for pigs! We sound chestnuts will stick to the boughs, and wear our burrs till Thanksgiving.

“Fine figure that! quite poetic! Who would n’t be a poet in such a poem of a morning? O Lucullus, you base old glutton, with your feasts and your emetics! see here, how I breathe and blow, breathe and blow,—that’s a dodge you were not up to!

“Hooray! now I’m full of gold air and go-ahead spirits.”

He marched off,— the gallant, buoyant young

brave. No finer figure of a Rebel walked the Continental soil unhung. On his nut-brown face his blonde moustache lay lovingly curling.

The Marquis de Chastellux, the chief, if not the only, authority on the Revolutionary moustache, does not specify Skerrett's in his "Travels in America." The distinction might have been invidious. But it was understood that, take it "by and large," color and curl, Skerrett's was the Moustache (with a big M) of its era. Many brother officers shaved in despair when they beheld it. Hence, perhaps, the number of shorn lips in the portraits of our heroes of that time.

"Something is going to happen to-day," thought the Major. "I bubble. I shall boil over, and make a fool of myself before night. I am in that ridiculous mood when a man loves his neighbor as himself, believes in success, wants to tilt at windmills. O October! you have intoxicated me! I challenge the world. Hold me, somebody, or I shall jump over the Highlands and take Sir Henry Clinton by the hair, then up to Saratoga and pick up Jack Burgoyne, knock their pates together, and fling them over the Atlantic."

A man's legs gallop when his blood and spirits are boiling after such a fashion. It did not take the Major any considerable portion of eternity

to measure off the furlongs of cultivated plain between Fishkill village and Putnam's head-quarters. In fact, he had need to despatch. He had slept late after his journey. The Council would be assembled, and already muddling their brains over the situation.

The Van Wyck farm-house stood, and still stands, with its flank to the road and its front to the Highlands.

"Not much clank and pomp and pageantry in this army of Israel Putnam," thought Skerrett. "No tents! Men are barracked in barns, I suppose, or sleep under corn-stalks, with pumpkins for pillows. No sentinels! But probably every man keeps his eyes peeled and his ears pricked up for the tramp of British brogans or Hessian boots on the soil."

There was, however, a sentry standing at the unhinged gate in the decimated paling of the farm-yard.

He turned his back, and paced to the end of his beat, as Major Skerrett approached.

"Aha!" thought the latter, "Jierck Dewitt is as quick-sighted as ever. He wants to dodge me. Poor fellow! Bottle has got him again, I fear. Why can't man be satisfied with atmosphere, and cut alcohol?"

Skerrett entered the gate, and hailed, "Jierck!"

The sentinel turned and saluted.

A clear case of Bottle ! The Colony of Jamaica was a more important ally to Great Britain in the Revolution than is generally known. Ah ! if people would only take their rum latent in its molasses, and pour out their undistilled toddies on their buckwheat cakes !

“ Jierck,” said the Major kindly, “ you promised me you would not touch it.”

“ So I did,” says the man, inflicting on himself the capital punishment of hanging his head ; “ and I kep stiff as the Lord Chancellor, till I got back home to Peekskill below here. There I found my wife had gone wrong.”

The poor fellow choked. A bad wife *is* a black dose.

“ We grew up together, sir, on the Brothertoft Manor lands. She was a Bilsby, one of the old families,—as brisk and bright a gal as ever stepped. We were married, and travelled just right, she alongside of me, and I alongside of her, pullin’ well and keepin’ everything drawin’. Well, when I shouldered arms, Lady Brothertoft — that’s the Patroon’s widow — got my wife to go down to York and be her maid. It was lettin’ down for Squire Dewitt’s son’s wife to eat in anybody’s kitchen. But that’s nothing. The harm is that Lady Brothertoft’s house is unlucky. Women don’t go into it and stay straight. There’s too much red in the parlors, —

too many redcoats round. They say that's why the Patroon cleared out, and got himself killed, if he is killed. That's what spoilt my wife."

Skerrett's supernatural spirits sank a little at this. There was an undeveloped true lover in the young man,—developed enough to show him what misery may come from such a wrong as Jierck's.

"That's why I took to rum," continued the man, dismally. "When my company was ordered to join Old Put at Peekskill, and I saw all the old places where my wife and I used to do our courtin', and saw my sister Kate smilin' at her sweetheart and makin' comforters for him, I could n't stand it. They all told me to keep away from the woman. But I did n't quite believe it, you know. So I went down to the Manor-House and saw her. She did n't dare to look me in the face. That had to be drownded somehow. I drownded it in rum. I can't get drunk like a beast,—that is n't into me,—but I have n't been sober one hour since until we came up here to Fishkill."

"Stop it now, Jierck, and try to forget."

"What's the use?"

"The use is this. We were all proud of you, as a crack man. We cannot spare you. You know as well as I do what we are fighting for. The Cause cannot spare you. Stand to your

guns now, like a man, against King George and Old Jamaica."

The sentinel was manned by these hearty words and tones.

"I 'll try," said he, "to please you, Major Skerrett."

Up went his head and his courage.

"That 's right," says the Major; "and we 'll have a fling at the enemy together before I go, and spike a gun for him."

"I must take another sip of October, after that," thought Skerrett, as he walked on toward the farm-house.

He halted on the steps, and inspected the scene.

October was quite as gorgeous to see, as it was glorious to tipple. It was in the Skerrett blood to love color.

"Color ! O blazes, what a conflagration of a landscape !" thought the Major; "O rainbows, what delicious blending ! V. I. B. G. Y. O. R. Violet hills far away, indigo zenith, blue sky on the hill-tops, green pastures, yellow elms, chestnuts, and ashes, orange pumpkins, red maples ! Flames ! Rainbows ! Splendors ! Take my blood, O my dear country ! and cheap, too, for such a pageant ! "

There were two parts to the scene he was regarding with this exhilaration,— a flat part and

an upright part. All around was a great scope of fertile plain, gerrymandered into farms. Half a mile away in front, the sudden mountains set up their backs to show their many-colored gaberdines, crimson, purple, and gold at the bottom flounce, belted with different shades of the same in regular gradation above, and sprigged all over with pines and cedars, green as May.

The morning sun winked at the Major over the summits, saying, as plain as a wink can speak, "Beat this, my Skerrett, in any clime, on any continent, if you can!"

The Major, with both his eyes, blinked back ecstatically, "It can't be beat! O Sol! It can't be beat!"

When he opened his dazzled eyes, and glanced again about him, he seemed to see thousands of little suns rollicking over the fields, and congeries of suns piling themselves like golden bombs here and there. They were not suns, but pumpkins, rollicking in the furrows, and every congeries was a heap of the same, putting their plump cheeks together and playing "sugar my neighbor."

"We must keep war out of this," thought the Major. "Nerve my good right arm, O Liberty, to protect this pie-patch!"

His earnest prayer was disturbed by the sound of voices close at hand.

Immediately Sergeant Lincoln appeared at the

corner of the house. A wondrously wiggy negro accompanied him.

“ Make way for the Lord Chancellor ! ” says Skerrett to himself, as this gray-headed, dusky dignitary loomed up. “ If I am ever elected Judge, I shall take that old fellow’s scalp for a wig. And his manners, too ! He seems to be laying down the law to the Sergeant, so flat that it will never stir again. Mysterious fellow, this orderly who quotes Latin ! I’d like to solve him, and offer him sympathy, if he has had the ‘ wond ’ old Put talks of. I owe him a cure for saving me from a kill.”

The two passed by, in eager conversation. Skerrett turned, and entered the farm-house, where the officers of Putnam’s army were sighing over blunders past, and elaborating schemes for the future.

Peter’s seedy coat was freshness and elegance compared to the scarecrow uniforms it now encountered. Our Revolutionary officers were braves at heart, but mostly Guys in costume.

III.

“Ah mon camarade ! ma belle Moustache ! My Petare !” cried Colonel La Radière, as Skerrett entered. “Soyez le bienvenu !”

The ardent Parisian officer of engineers rushed forward, and embraced his young friend with effusion.

“Glad to see you, Peter !” says Captain Livingston, a dry fellow, son of the Patroon. “Now, Radière, there’s a second man who talks French, to fire back your sacrebleus. *Moi et Anthony’s Nose sommes fatigués à vous faire echo.*”

“Come, boys,” says old Put, “talk Continental !”

The other officers in turn made Skerrett welcome, and the business of brewing blunders went on.

Does any one want a historic account of that Council of War, and what it did not do ?

The want is easily supplied. Rap for the spirit of Colonel Humphreys, then late of Derby, Connecticut, late of Yale College, late tutor at Philipse-Manor. He was Putnam’s aide, and wrote

his biography. He was an inexorable poetaster. He was afterwards pompous gold-stick to Mr. President Washington. He went as Plenipo to Madrid, returned, became a model of deportment, and was known to his countrymen as the Ambassador from Derby.

(Raps are heard. Enter the Ghost of Humphreys.

“Now then, Ghost, talk short and sharp, not, as you used to,—to borrow two favorite words of yours,—sesquipedalian and stentorophonic! Tell us what was done at that council, and be spry about it!”

“Young Sir, I shall report your impertinence to George Washington and Christopher Columbus in Elysium. Christopher will say, ‘Founder the continent!’ George will say, ‘Perish the country!’ if its youth have drawn in and absorbed their bump of reverence.”

“O, belay that, old boy! Tell us what you did at the Council!”

“Nothing, your nineteenth-centuryship!” responds Ghost, quelled and humble. “We pondered, and propounded, and finally concluded to do nothing, and let the enemy make the next move.”

“Which he proceeded to do by sending up General Vaughan to burn Kingston. That’s enough! Avaunt, Ghost!”

Exit Humphreys to tell Chris and George that America is going to the dogs.)

“ Well,” said Putnam at last, “ we’ve discussed and discussed, and I don’t see that there’s any way of getting a crack at the enemy, unless one of you boys wants to swim down the river, with a torch in his teeth, and set one of those frigates below the Highlands on fire. Who speaks ? ”

“ Cold weather for swimming ! ” says Livingston.

“ Well, boys, you must contrive something to keep our spirits up,” Putnam resumed. “ When I was up to Fort Ti in ’58, and fighting was dull, we used to go out alone and bushwhack for a private particular Indian.”

“ Perhaps I can offer a suggestion,” said Major Scrammel, Putnam’s other aide, re-entering the room after a brief absence.

Scrammel was a handsomish man with a bad-dish face. A man with his cut of jib and shape of beak hardly ever weathers the lee shore of perdition. For want of a moustache to twirl, he had a trick of pulling his nose. Perhaps he was training that feature for tweaks to come.

“ Blaze away, Scrammel ! ” said his General ; “ you always have some ambush or other in your head.”

“ Lady Brothertoft’s nigger, the butler, is up here with the latest news from below. I have just been out to speak to him.”

"What, Scrammel!" says Livingston, *sotto voce*. "A billet-doux from the fair Lucy?"

"La plus belle personne en Amerique!" Radière sighs.

"You don't except the mother?" Livingston inquired; "that mature, magnificent Amazon!"

"No," replied the Frenchman, laboriously building, brick by brick, a Gallo-American sentence. "The mother of the daughtare is too much in the Ladie Macquebeth. I figure to myself a poniard, enormous sharpe, in her fine ouhite hand, and at my heart. I seem to see her poot ze-pardon! *the* poison in *the* basin—the bowl—the gobbelit. I say, 'Radière, care thyself! It is a dame who knows to stab.' Mais, Mees Lucie! Ah, c'est autre chose!"

"Come, Scrammel!" Putnam said, impatiently; "we are waiting for your news."

"The nigger stole away on some business of his own, which he is mysterious about; but he tells me that his mistress consoled herself at once for our retirement from Peekskill after we lost the forts. She had some of her friends from the British ships and Clinton's army at her house as soon as we were gone."

"I believe she is as dangerous a Tory as lives in all Westchester," said the General. "She ought to be put in security."

“What! after all those dinners of hers we have eaten, General?” says Livingston.

“I wish the dinners were out of me, and had never been in me,” Old Put rejoined, sheepishly. “I’m afraid we used to talk too much after her Madeira.”

The Council was evidently of that opinion, as a look whisking about the circle testified.

A very significant look, with a great basis of facts behind it. Suppose we dig into the brain of one of these officers,—say that keen Livingston’s,—and unearth a few facts about Mrs. Brothertoft, as she is at the beginning of Part II. of this history.

Now, then, off with Livingston’s scalp, and the top of his skull! and here we go rummaging among the convolutions of his brain for impressions branded, “BROTHERTOFT, MRS.” We strike a lead. We find a pocket. How compact this brain stows its thoughts! It must, for it has the millions on millions of a lifetime to contain. We have read of a thousand leagues of lace packed into a nut-shell. We have seen the Declaration of Independence photographed within the periphery of a picayune. Here’s closer stowage,—a packet of thoughts of actual material dimensions, but so infinitesimal that we shall have to bring a microscope to bear before we can apply the micrometer. Come, Sirius, near-

est neighbor among the suns of eternity, pour thy beams through our lens and magnify this record! Thanks, Sirius! Quite plain now! That little black point has taken length and breadth, and here's the whole damnation in large pica,—Heaven save us from the like!

Livingston Junior on Mrs. Brothertoft. Abstract of Record:—

“By scalps and tomahawks, what a splendid virago! She must be, this summer of 1777, some thirty-five or thirty-six, and in her prime. Heart's as black as her hair, some say. Crushed her husband's spirit, and he took himself off to kingdom come. Ambitious? I should think so. Tory, and peaches to the enemy? Of course. She uses her womanhood as a blind, and her beauty as a snare. Very well for her to say, ‘My business is to protect my property, and establish my daughter. Women don't understand politics, and hate bloodshed.’ Bah! she understands her kind of politics, like a Catherine de' Medici. Bloodshed! She could stab a man and see him writhe. But she gives capital dinners,—more like England than any others in America. Poor old Put, honest, frank, simple-hearted fellow! look at him on the sofa there with her, and a pint too much of her Madeira under his belt! She knows just how near to let his blue sleeve and buff cuff come to that shoul-

der of hers. He 'll tell all his plans to her, she 'll whisper 'em to a little bird, and pounce ! one of these fine days the redcoats will be upon us. Upon us and on her sofa ! Yes, and a good many inches nearer than Old Put is allowed to sit. For they do whisper scandal about Madam. When she dropped Julia Peartree Smith, the old tabby talked as old cats always talk about their ex-friends. Scandal ! Yes, by the acre ; but it 's splendid to see how she walks right over it. And several of us fine fellows will not hear or speak scandal of a house where that lovely Lucy lives,—the sweet, pure, innocent angel. They say the mother means to trade her off to a redcoat as soon as she can find one to suit. Mamma wants a son-in-law who will give her, scandal and all, a footing among stars and garters in England, when she has seen her estates safe through the war. It 's too bad. I 'd go down and kidnap that guileless, trustful victim myself, if I was n't so desperately lazy. There 's Scrammel too,—he would play one of his meanest tricks to get her. Scrammel was almost the only one of us boys in buff and blue that was not taboo from Miss Lucy's side. Mamma was not over cordial to our color unless it was buttoned over breasts that held secrets. Her black eyes very likely saw scoundrel in Scrammel's face, and used him. Poor Lucy ! It looks dark

for her. And yet her love will never let her see what her mother is."

Enough, Livingston! Thanks for this bit of character! Here's your dot of a record, labelled "Brothertoft, Mrs."! Now trepan your self with your own skull, clap your scalp back again on your sinciput, and listen to what Scrammel is saying!

"The old nigger tells me," he was saying, "that Sir Henry Clinton and his Adjutant spent the night after Forts Clinton and Montgomery were taken quietly at Brothertoft Manor-House."

"Well," said the General, "then they had a better night than we had, running away through the Highlands. We can't protect our friends. If the enemy have only made themselves welcome at the Manor-House, instead of burning it for its hospitality to us, Madam is lucky."

"She seems to have made her new guests welcome. The nigger thinks she knew they were coming."

"By George! — by Congress! I mean," says Put, wincing, "if I ever get back to Peekskill —"

"She seems to think, according to her butler's story, that you are never to come back," Scrammel struck in.

"If that is all the news you have to tell, by way of keeping our spirits up, you might as well have been silent, sir!" growls Putnam.

"It's not all," Scrammel resumed. "The nigger thinks they are getting up some new expedition. But whether they do or not, the adjutant don't go. He is to stay some days at the Manor."

"Lord Rawdon, is n't it?" Put asked. "Well, he is a gentleman and a fine fellow,—not one of those arrogant, insolent dogs that rile us so."

"Not Rawdon. He was to be. But Major Kerr got the appointment by family influence."

"Kurr! c'est chien, n'est ce pas?" whispered Radière to Livingston.

"Yes," returned the Captain; "and this Kerr is a sad dog. He bit Scrammel once badly at cards in New York, before the war. Scrammel don't forgive. He hates Kerr, and means to bite back. Hear him snarl now!"

"The Honorable Major Kerr," Scrammel continued, "third son of the Earl of Bendigh, Adjutant-General to Clinton's forces, a fellow who hates us and abuses us and maltreats our prisoners, but an officer of importance, is staying and to stay several days, the only guest, at Brother-toft Manor-House. Let me see; it can't be more than twenty miles away."

He marked his words, and glanced about the circle. His eyes rested upon Livingston last.

"Oho!" says that gentleman. "I begin to comprehend. You mean to use the Brother-

toft majordomo as Colonel Barton did his man Prince at Newport. Woolly-head's skull is to butt through Kerr's bedroom door, at dead of night. Then, enter Scrammel, puts a pistol to his captive's temple and marches him off to Fishkill. Bravo! Belle idée, n'est ce pas, mon Colonel?"

"Magnifique!" rejoined Radière. "I felicit thee of it, my Scaramelle."

"Now, boys!" says Put, "this begins to sound like business. We need some important fellow, like Kerr, taken prisoner and brought here, to keep our spirits up. The thing's easy enough and safe enough. If I was twenty years younger, general or no general, I'd make a dash to cut him out. Who volunteers to capture the Adjutant?"

"I remember myself," said Radière, gravely, "of a billet, very short, very sharp, which our Chief wrote to Sir Clinton, lately. It was of one Edmund Palmer, taken — so this billet said — as one espy, condemned as one espy, and hang-ged as espy. Sir Clinton waits to answer that little billet. But I do not wish to read in his response the name of one of my young friends, taken as espy and hang-ged."

"Why does not Scrammel execute Scrammel's plan?" asked Livingston.

"I cannot be spared," the aide-de-camp responded.

"O yes! never mind me!" cried the General. "Skerrett, here, can fill your place. Or Humphreys can stop writing doggerel and do double duty."

Scrammel evidently was not eager to leave a vacancy, or to gag his brother aide-de-camp's muse.

"Why don't you volunteer yourself, Livingston?" he said. "You know the country and the house, and seemed to be well up in the method of Prescott's capture at Newport."

"I have not my reputation to make," said the other, haughtily. Indeed, his reckless pluck was well known. "But I'm desperately lazy," which was equally a notorious fact.

No other spoke, and presently all eyes were making focus upon that blonde Moustache, which the Marquis de Chastellux does not, and these pages do, endow with a big M, and make historic.

It was only the other day that the wearer of that decoration had become the hero of a famous ballad, beginning,—

"'T was night, rain poured; when British blades,
In number twelve or more,
As they sat tippling apple-jack,
Heard some one at the door.

"'Arise,' he cried,—'t was Skerrett spoke,—
'And trudge, or will or nill,
Twelve miles to General Washington,
At Pennibecker's Mill."

Then the ballad went on to state, in stanzas many and melodious, how it happened that the "blades" of his Majesty's great knife, the Army, were sheathed in a carouse, at an outpost near Philadelphia, without sentries. Apple-jack, too, — why they condescended to apple-jack, — that required explanation: "And apple-jack, that tipple base, Why did these heroes drain? O, where were nobler taps that night, — Port, sherry, and champagne?" Then the forced march of the unlucky captives was depicted: "It rained. The red coats on their backs Their skins did purple, blue; The powder on their heads grew paste; Each toe its boot wore through." The poem closed with Washington's verdict on the exploit: "Skerrett, my lad, thou art a Trump, The ace of all the pack; Come into Pennibecker's Mill, And share *my* apple-jack!"

Hero once, hero always! When a man has fairly compromised himself to heroism, there is no let-up for him. The world looks to him at once, when it wants its "deus ex machina."

In the present quandary, all eyes turned to Peter Skerrett, Captor of Captives and Washington's Ace of Trumps.

"General," said he, "I seem to be the only unattached officer present. Nothing can be done now about my mission. I do not love to be idle. Allow me to volunteer in this service, if you think it important."

Old Put began to look grave. "You risk your life. If they catch you in their lines, it is hanging business."

"I knew this morning," thought the Major, "that I should make a fool of myself before night. I have!"

"No danger, General!" he said aloud. "I've got the knack of this work. I like it better than the decapitation part of my trade."

"Ah, Skerrett!" Livingston says, "that ballad will be the death of you. You will be adding Fitte after Fitte, until you get yourself discomfitted at last. Pun!"

Mark this! It was the Continental Pun at its point of development reached one year after the Declaration of Independence. O let us be joyful! Let us cry aloud with joy at our progress since. Puns like the above are now deemed senile, and tolerated only in the weekly newspapers.

No doggerel had been written about Scrammel. No lyric named him hero. "Your friend seems to have a taste for the office of kidnapper," he caitifly sneered to Livingston, under cover of his own hand, which tweaked the Scrammel nose as he spoke.

"He has a taste for doing what no one else dares," rejoined the other. "Your nose is safe from him, even if he overhears you. I say,

Skerrett, I don't feel so lazy as I did. Take me with you. I know this country by leagues and by inches."

"No, Harry; General Putnam cannot spare his Punster. One officer is enough. I shall take Jierck Dewitt for my aide-de-camp. He knows the Brothertoft-Manor country."

"Empty Jierck of rum, cork him and green-seal him, mouth and nose, and there cannot be a better man."

"Since you will go, you must," says Put. "By the way, if you want a stanch, steady man, take Sergeant Lincoln. He somehow knows this country as if he had crept over it from the cradle. Where is that negro of Lady Brothertoft's, Scrammel?"

"I left him talking to Lincoln. Major Skerrett will easily find him."

"He was my wiggy friend," thought Skerrett.

"Don't fail to bag Kerr," says Livingston. "He wants a Yankee education,—so does all England."

"Yes," says Radière, "we must have these Kurr at school. We must teach to them civility through our noses of rebels. We must flogge them with roddes from the Liberté-Tree. They shall partake our pork and bean. Yankee Doodle shall play itself to them on our two whistles and a tambour. Go, my Skerrett!"

Liberty despatch thee ! Be the good, lucky boy ! ”

All the officers gave him Good speed ! and Humphreys, Poetaster-General, began to bang the two lobes of his brain together, like a pair of cymbals, to strike out rhymes in advance for a pæan on the conquering hero’s return.

“ You won’t stay to dinner,” cries Put. “ There’s corned beef and apple-sauce, and a York State buckskin pumpkin-pie,—I wish it was a Connecticut one ! ”

“ Yes,” says Livingston, “ and I watched the cook this morning coursing that dumb rooster of yours, General, until he breathed his last.”

“ Ah, my Skerrett ! ” sighed Radière. “ Will posterity appreciate our sacrifices ? Will they remember themselves — these oblivious posterity — of the Frenchmen who abandoned the cuisines of Paris to feed upon the swine and the bean *à discretion*, to swallow the mush sans melasse, to drink the Appel Jacque ? Will they build the marble mausoleum, inscribed, ‘ CI-GIT LA RADIÈRE, COLONEL. HE WAS A GOOD HEART AND A BAD STOMACH, AND HE SHED HIS DIGESTION FOR LIBERTY ? ’ ”

Skerrett laughed. “ I will mention it to posterity, Colonel,” he said, — and this page redeems his promise.

Then, lest weeds might sprout under his feet,

the Major turned his back upon dinner,—that moment announced,—and launched himself upon the current of his new adventure.

“Down!” he soliloquized; “down, my longings for buckskin pie, and for rooster dead of congestion of the lungs from over coursing! Tempt me not, ye banquets of Sybaris, until my train is laid and waiting for the fusee.”

I V.

MAJOR SKERRETT paused on the farm-house steps.

“Jierck Dewitt, I want,” he thought. “And there he is on guard, looking every inch a soldier again. My good word has quite set him up. Mem.—A word of cheer costs little, and may help much. Now for Sergeant Lincoln and the negro!”

Just at the edge of the bank, in front of the farm-house, Skerrett perceived the Sergeant sitting.

His head was resting on his hands. The physiognomy of his back revealed despondency. An old well-sweep bent over him, and seemed to long to comfort him with a douse of balm from its bucket.

The landscape glowed, as before. The jolly pumpkins grinned, as before. The Major’s spirits were still at bubble and boil. “Every prospect was pleasing, and only man”—that is only Sergeant—seemed woe-begone.

“He is feeling his wound,—the ‘wownd’ Put

talked of,—I fear,” thought Skerrett. “I must cheer him. Unhappy people are not allowed in the Skerrett precinct.”

“Why, Orderly!” says the Major, approaching, and laying his hand on the other’s shoulder; “you must not be down-hearted, man! What has happened? What can I do for you?”

The Sergeant raised his head, and shook it despairingly.

“Thank you,” said he. “Nothing! It is too late!”

“Too late! That is a point of time my time-piece has not learnt how to mark.”

Indeed, the Skerrett movement was too elastic in springs, and too regular with its balance-wheel, to strike any hour but “Just in time!”

The Sergeant thanked him, with a smile and manner of singular grace, and repeated, sorrowfully, “It is too late.”

“Too late is suicide,” says Peter. “We will not cut our throats till after Indian summer. Presently you shall tell me what *is* and is *not* too late. First, I have a question or two to ask. The General tells me you know this country thoroughly.”

“I do by heart,—by sad heart.”

“I have undertaken to cut in, and cut out, where the enemy is, twenty miles below on the river.”

The Orderly at once seemed greatly interested.

"Twenty miles below? No one can know that region better than I."

"Was it there his heart was wounded?" thought the Major.

"Ah, then! you 're just my man," Skerrett continued, ignoring the other's depression. "I have volunteered on a wild-goose chase. I may need to know every fox-track through all the Highlands to get away safe with my goose, if I catch him."

Major Skerrett, surprised at a sudden air of eager attention and almost excitement in the older man, paused a moment.

"Go on!" said the other authoritatively, with a voice and manner more of Commander-in-Chief than Sergeant.

Skerrett felt, as he had done before, the peculiar magnetism of this mysterious Orderly, who quoted Latin and bowed like a courtier.

"I have taken upon myself," said he, "to cut out a British officer of distinction, now staying at a country house twenty miles below. I may want you of my party. General Putnam recommends you."

The Orderly sprang up and grasped Major Skerrett's arm with both his hands.

"Who is the man? Name! Name!" he gasped.

“ Major Kerr,” replied Skerrett, coolly.

“ Wait! wait a moment!” cried the other, in wild excitement.

He rushed to the edge of the bank, where a path plunged off, leading to the Highland road, and was lost among the glowing recesses of a wood skirting the base of the heights. He halted there, and screamed, in a frantic voice, “ Voltaire! Voltaire! ”

And neither the original destructive thinker thus entitled, nor any American namesake of his answering the call, the Orderly raced down the slope, with hat gone and gray cue bobbing against his coat-collar.

He disappeared in the grove, and the Major could hear his feet upon the dry leaves, and his voice still crying loudly, “ Voltaire! Voltaire! ”

“ Has the old man gone mad? ” thought Skerrett. “ Voltaire the Great is getting too ancient to travel. It is hardly fair to disturb him. He is a soldier ‘emeritus’ of our Good Cause. He waked France up. We have to thank him largely that France has an appetite for freedom, and sends her sons over to help us fight for it. But he cannot hear this hullabaloo at Ferney; Lafayette, Radière, and the others, represent their master, with such heart and stomach as they can.

“ I must not lose sight of my runaway,” con-

tinued he to himself. "The name of Kerr struck him like a shot. He may have a grudge there. Some private vendetta in the case. And yet this mild old man always seemed to me to have entirely merged his personality in patriotism. I fancied that he had forgotten all his likes, dislikes, loves, and hates, and given up all ties except his allegiance to an idea."

Major Skerrett walked rapidly to the edge of the bank, where Sergeant Lincoln had first given tongue for an absent philosopher.

As he was about to follow the path, he heard steps again in the wood. In a moment the Orderly reappeared, and ran up the slope, panting. He was followed by a person who moved slower, and blew harder, the same old wiggy negro whom Major Skerrett had observed laying down the law to his companion.

"So that is Voltaire!" thought the Major. "Well, it is the first time I have ever found the devil blacker than he is painted."

The Orderly sank, agitated and out of breath, on the ground.

Voltaire came up the hill, and, being hatless, pulled hard at his gray wig, by way of salute. The wig was rooted to the scalp. Voltaire left it *in situ*, and bowed as grandly as a black dignitary may when he is blown by a good run.

“I was in despair just now,” said Sergeant Lincoln. “In despair when I said it was too late to help me. Perhaps it is not so. I trust God sends you, Major Skerrett, to show us the way out of our troubles.”

“This is sound Gospel,” thought Skerrett. “This black Voltaire may be the Evangelist; but the Gospel is unimpeachable.”

“Come, Sergeant,” continued he aloud, “tell me what all this means, my friend. We must despatch. My bird down the river may take wing, if I waste time.”

“I am pained, my dear young friend,” said the senior, rising, “to acknowledge to you an unwilling deceit of mine. But I must do so. You have known me always under a false name. I am not Lincoln, but Brothertoft,—Edwin Brothertoft.”

“My father’s friend!” said Skerrett, taking the other’s hand. “Mr. Brothertoft, so missed, so desired by the Good Cause. Why —”

Here Major Skerrett interrupted himself, and went to rummaging in his brain for the disconnected strips of record stamped, “Brothertofts, The family.” The strips pasted themselves together, and he ran his mind’s eye rapidly along, as one might read a mile or so of telegram in cipher.

As he read with one eye introverted and gal-

loping over the record, while it whirled by like a belt on a drum making a million revolutions in a breath, he kept the other eye fixed upon Mr. Brothertoft, *alias* Lincoln, before him.

This sad, worn, patient, gentle face supplied a vivid flash of interpretation. It shed light upon all the dusky places in Major Skerrett's knowledge of the family. The eye looking outward helped the eye looking inward. Instantly, by this new method of utilizing strabismus, he saw what he remembered faintly become distinct. He could now understand why this quiet gentleman had dropped his tools,—forceful mallet and keen chisel,—and let the syllables of his unfinished mark on the world wear out.

“I have heard and read of these blighting hurts,” thought Peter, “and I trifled with their existence, and was merry as before,—God forgive me! Now I touch the wounded man, and it chills me. I lose heart and hope. But strangely, too, this man who first teaches me to feel the pain, teaches me also that the sufferer needs my love. Seems to me I am more in earnest than I was two minutes ago. I feel older and gentler. I wish I was his son!”

“Why?” said Edwin Brothertoft, answering slowly and sadly, while the other's brain read records and forged thoughts at this furious speed. “Would you ask me why my life is what it is,

and not what men would say it might have been ? Ah, my friend, the story is long and dreary,—too dreary to darken the heart of youth."

Sadly as he spoke, there was no complaint in his tone. He seemed to regard his facts a little dreamily, as if he were mentioning some other man's experience.

"But the past is dead," he continued, "and here are present troubles alive and upon me."

"Troubles alive !" says the Major, feeling brave, buoyant Peter Skerrett still stirring under the buff and blue. "Those I can help floor, perhaps. Name them !"

He looked so victorious, and the Moustache, albeit unknown to the pages of De Chastellux, so underscored his meaning nose, and so drew the cartouche of a hero about his firm mouth, that Brothertoft thrilled with admiration through his sadness.

Everybody has seen the phantasmagoric shop-sign. "VINEGAR," you read upon it, as you approach down the street. You don't want Vinegar, and you gaze reproachfully at the sign. But what is this ? As you advance, a blur crosses your eyes. 'Twas Vinegar surely ! 'Tis SUGAR now. And that you do want ; and proceed to purchase a barrel of crushed, a keg of powdered, and a box of loaves wearing foolscaps of Tyrian purple on their conical bald pates.

Edwin Brothertoft had seen only DESPAIR written up before him. He advanced a step, at Skerrett's words, lifted up his eyes, and Despair shifted to HOPE.

"When you named Major Kerr," he said, "you named one who is devising evil to me and mine. Capture him and the harm is stayed. My faithful old friend Voltaire and I will try to tell you the story between us."

Voltaire considered this his introduction, and bowed pompously.

"You are too juicy, Voltaire, and too shiny, and not sardonic enough, to bear the name of the weazened Headpiece of France," the Major said. "When I made my pilgrimage to Ferney, I found that Atropos of Bigotry in a night-cap and dressing-gown, looking as wrinkled, leathery, and Great as one of Michael Angelo's Sibyls. I hope you are as true to Freedom as he was, and a more wholesome man."

Skerrett made this talk to give the old fellow time to blow, as well as to stir up a smile to the surface of Brothertoft's sad face.

"Yes sir," said the negro, bowing again. "Voltaire, sir, omnorum gotherum of Brothertoft Manor-House. Hannibal *was* my name; but I heard Mr. Ben Franklin say that Mr. Voltaire was the greatest man he knewed, so I married to that name, and tuk it."

Here he paused and grinned. His white teeth gleamed athwart his face, as the white stocking flashes through, when one slits a varnished boot, too tight across the instep.

"I have been here at Fishkill some months," said Brothertoft. "At first I did not allow myself to think of my family. Then neighborhood had its effect. I communicated my whereabouts to this trusty friend. He got my message, and comes to give me the first news I have had since I left home at the news of Lexington."

"More than two years ago," Skerrett said.

"And in those two years," continued the other, "my daughter has passed from child to woman."

"Oho!" thought Peter. "His daughter—Radière's *la plus belle*—is in this business. My years in Europe had made me almost forget there was such a person. Is she like father, or mother, I wonder?"

"From child to woman, sir," says Voltaire, "and there 's not such another young lady in the Province,—State, I mean."

Bravo, Voltaire! You refuse to talk "nigger." You still remember that Tombigbee is a dialect taboo to you. Continue to recollect that on these pages you are a type of a race on whose qualities the world is asking information. Christy's Minstrels dance out their type negro, Jim

Crow, an impossible buffoon. La Beecher Stowe presents hers, Uncle Tom, an exceptional saint. Mr. Frederick Douglass introduces himself with a courtier's bow and an orator's tongue. The ghost of John C. Calhoun rushes forward, and points to a stuffed Gorilla. Then *souviens toi Voltaire* of thy representative position, and don't lapse into lingo!

"When I abandoned home," Brothertoft resumed, "I believed that I could be of no further use to a daughter who had disowned me. But I have found that a man cannot cease to love his own flesh and blood."

"Nor his flesh and blood him," says the negro. "Other people may do the hating. Miss Lucy only knows how to love."

Fort bien Voltaire! except the pronunciation "lub."

"It was only a day or two before the capture of the forts that my tardy message of good-will reached my friend here," said the ex-Patroon.

"And just in time," that friend rejoined.

"I hope so," sighed Putnam's Orderly.

"Yes sir," the negro said, turning to Skerrett. "It was now or never. So I left my great dinner-party. Sir Henry Clinton and his suite were to dine with us to-day!"

"Grand company!" the Major said, seeing that a tribute of respect was wanted.

“SIRR HENERY CLINTON!” repeated the butler with pride. “I did n’t like to leave. My wife Sappho can cook prime. My boy Plato can pass a plate prime. But where’s the style to come from when I’m away? Who’s to give the signals? ‘Ground dishes! Handle covers! Draw covers! Forrud march with covers to the pantry!’ Who’s to pull the corks and pour the Madeira so it won’t blob itself dreggy?”

He paused and sighed.

Edwin Brothertoft was silent. The thought of Red dinner-parties at the Manor was evidently not agreeable to him.

“We are not getting on at a gallop,” thought Skerrett. “But we are on the trail. My guides must take their own time. They know the way and the dangers, and I do not. The facts will all come out within five minutes.”

“Well, Voltaire,” he said, “a bad appetite to ’em all! Go on with your story. You make me hungry with your dinner-parties.”

“Ha, ha!” chuckled the butler,—his vision of himself as Ganymede, serving Sir Clinton Tonans with hypernectareous tipple, vanishing. “Ha, ha!” and with his triumph he lapsed for a moment into Tombigbee: “Dey tinks, down ter de Manor, dat I’se lyin’ sick abed wid de colored mabbus.”

And then the old fellow proceeded to relate

how he had shammed sick yesterday, dodged away at evening, and tramped all night by by-paths through the Highlands ; how British scouts had challenged his steps and fired at his rustle ; how stumbling-blocks had affronted his shins, and many a stub had met his toes ; and how at last, after manifold perils, he had found his old master under the guise of an Orderly, and announced to him a new wrong in the house of Brothertoft, — a new wrong, the climax of an old tyranny.

No wonder Mr. Brothertoft had been despondent so that even his back showed it, — so despondent, that the well-sweep longed to douse him with a bucket of balm. No wonder that he sadly said, “ Too late ! ” and could see no better hour than that, marked by the Skerrett timepiece.

Now then for this new wrong ! It shall be told condensed, so that indignation can have it, a tough nut to crack with its teeth.

V.

“IN short,” says Voltaire, winding up his story, “Madame Brothertoft is going to marry off Miss Lucy to Major Kerr, day after to-morrow evening.”

“To marry off! Then it is nilly the lady!” Skerrett said.

“Nilly, sir! Yes, the nilliest kind!”

There, Sir Peter, is a tough nut for your Indignation to bite on!

Peter was an undeveloped True Lover. The “vital spark of heavenly flame” was in him; but it lay latent under his uniform, as fire lurks in a quartz pebble, until the destined little boy strikes another quartz pebble against it. Now there is a little boy of Destiny whose trade it is to go about knocking hearts together and striking Love,—that pretty pink flash, that rosy flash, which makes cheeks blush sweeter and eyes gleam brighter than they knew how to blush and gleam before,—that potent flash which takes hold of proper hearts and carbo-

nizes them into diamonds of gleam unquenchable, with myriad facets and a smile on every one,—that keen flash which commands bad hearts to burn away into ugly little heaps of gray ashes. There is such an urchin, and Cupid, alias Eros, is his name. He had tapped Peter Skerrett's heart several times with hearts labelled, "Anna's heart," "Belinda's heart," "Clara's heart," "Delia's heart," and so on down the alphabet. No perceptible love had answered these taps. Perhaps the urchin made the female heart impinge upon the male, instead of clashing them together in mutual impact. Or perhaps he did not do his tapping in a dark place,—for shadow is needful to show light,—love wants sorrow for a background.

However this might be, Peter Skerrett was still an undeveloped true lover. He had made no mistakes in love, he had had no disappointments. His illusions were not gone. He still believed love was the one condition of marriage. Marriage without it this innocent youth deemed an outrage.

The latent love in his heart cried, "Shame!" when he heard Voltaire's story. Indignant blood rushed to his cheeks, to his eyes indignant fire, and curl indignant to his moustache. He discharged a drop of ire by skimming a flat stone at a chattering chipmunk, enthroned on a pump-

kin hard by. Then he began to put in trenchant queries.

“ You are sure, Mr. Brothertoft, that your daughter does not love Kerr.”

“ Sure. I have her word for it.”

“ Does he love her ? ”

“ He wants her.”

“ Why ? ”

“ She is a beauty and an heiress,— those are the patent charms.”

“ Ah ! But does she know that Kerr is a fanfaron and a rake,— selfish, certainly, probably base, and very likely cruel ? ”

“ She knows only what her mother tells her. Friends are taboo in that house.”

“ But does she divine nothing ? Nothing to base a refusal on ? Pardon me if my tone seems to express a doubt of this young lady, but—”

“ But you have seen so many captivated by rank and a red coat. My friend, I have done her greater injustice than any you can imagine. I believed my own child spoiled by bad influences. We could not understand each other. An evil-omened figure held a black curtain between us. I was too sick at heart to see the truth. I had lost my faith. I thought that my daughter had taken in poison with her mother’s milk. I fancied that she was a willing pupil when her mother taught her to hate and despise me. I

abandoned her. Miserable error,—miserable! And punished now! punished most cruelly! My spleen, my haste, my intemperate despair, are bitterly punished by my daughter's danger. How fatally I misjudged her in my sore-wounded heart! I know her better at last. Better now, when I fear it is too late to save her. I know her at last through this faithful servant and friend. He stood by her when I forsook her. God forgive me! God forgive me!"

He poured out this confession with passion growing as he spoke. Then he turned and grasped Major Skerrett by the shoulder.

"What is to be done?" he cried.

"Much!" said Skerrett, quietly, commanding his own eagerness roused by the other's agony. "Remember that this wedding is not to be before day after to-morrow. I have volunteered to present the intended bridegroom to General Putnam here, by that time. Do you suppose I intend to break my engagement, whether it forbids his banns or not?"

He assumed more confidence than he felt. The enterprise was growing complicated. While there was merely question of taking or not taking a prisoner, Skerrett could look at the matter coolly. Success was only another laurel in his *corona triumphalis!* Failure was but a bay the less. If he bagged his man, another canto of

doggerel. No bag, no poem. The attempt even would keep Put and his paladins amused until their general decadence of tail was corrected, and their bosoms swelled with valor again, and that was enough.

But here was a new character behind the scenes. The hero's pulse began to gallop and his heart to prance. A woman's happiness at stake!

“Ah!” reflected the Major, “I was cool enough so long as I thought I was merely entertaining a circle of downcast braves, bushwhacking to steal an exchangeable Adjutant, and giving the enemy an unexpected dig in the ribs. But the new portion of the adventure makes me shaky. If I fail, I lose my laurel, all the same, and a lady has to be bonneted with a wreath of orange-flowers against her will. If I don't bag, Beauty goes to the Kerrs; I miss my canto and the poem of her life becomes a dirge. I must not think of it, or I shall lose my spirits.”

“Prying into a maiden's heart is new business to me,” he resumed to the father, who stood watching him anxiously. “I cannot quite comprehend this matter. She does not love this man. Her dislike has brought about a reconciliation between you. Where is her No? I have heard that women carry such a weapon,—brandish it, too, and strike on much less provocation than she has.”

“She is not a free agent,” replied Brothertoft. “Her mother dominates her. She forced her to disown me. She will force her to this marriage. Lucy has been quelled all her life. I hope and believe that if she were released, or even supported for one moment in rebellion, her character might find it had vigor. But she is still willow in her mother’s hands. If the mother, for whatever reasons, has made up her mind to this marriage, she will crowd her daughter into it.”

“What reasons are sufficient for such tyranny?”

“I divine metaphysical reasons, that I cannot speak of. It pains me greatly, my dear young friend, to talk harshly of my daughter’s mother. Perhaps after all she may mean kindly now. She may be mistaken in Kerr.”

“No,” said Peter. “No woman of the world can mistake such a fellow.”

“Still, he is a strong friend to have on the other side.”

“Yes; and this is a moment when the other side is up and we are down. I can see how, with these great estates, a Patrooness may be willing to save herself a confiscation. She can pretend to be neutral, with a leaning to Liberty, and leave her son-in-law to rescue the acres if Liberty goes to the gallows.”

“Such considerations have brought matters to

a crisis. Kerr is there on the spot. Clinton is victor. So the poor child is hurried off without giving her time to consider."

"We must make time for her. I will go at my plans presently. But I should like to hear a little more of Voltaire's story."

"You are very kind to take this interest in the welfare of a desolate and disheartened man, and those who are dear to him."

Peter's cheeks were too brown to show blushes, and his cocked hat covered his white forehead; but he noticed that his heart was brewing a crimson blush, whether it burst through the valves and came to the surface or not. In fact he began to feel a lively sympathy for this weak girl, into whose orbit he was presently to fling himself, like a yellow-haired comet, with spoil-sport intent. The more he tried to cork in his blush, the more it would n't be corked. And presently bang it came to the surface. His white forehead tingled at every pore, as the surface of a glass of Clicquot may tingle with its own bursting bubbles. No such rosy flash had ever showed on his countenance, when Anna's or Belinda's or Clara's or Delia's cheeks challenged him to kindle up. But the mere thought of a name much lower down in the alphabet now made his heart eager to do its share in striking fire and lighting this sorrowful scene about the Lucy in question.

The sad father was not in the way to observe blushes; nor was Voltaire, who now proceeded to finish his story.

For fear the worthy fellow might lapse into brogue,—whereupon the ghost of John C. Calhoun would hurroo with triumph, and ventriloquize derisive niggerisms through the larynx of his type negro, the stuffed Gorilla,—Voltaire's tale shall be transposed into the third person. Then the hiatuses can be filled up, and we shall be able to peer a little into Lucy Brothertoft's heart, and see whether the Heavenly Powers have guarded her, as Sappho the cook long ago prophesied they would.

VI.

No hag is a houri to her *fille de chambre*.

Mrs. Brothertoft, handsome hag, was thoroughly comprehended by the Voltaire family. That was no doubt part of their compensation for being black, and below stairs.

Sweet Lucy was also well understood in the kitchen.

Many a pitiful colloquy went on about her between those three faithful souls.

Sappho's conundrum, "What is de most importantest 'gredient in soup?" was often propounded. Voltaire always protested against such vulgar remarks. Plato always guessed "Faith!" and pretended he'd never heard the riddle before.

"Faith is all very well," Voltaire would say, in studied phrase, as a model to his son. "But where is the Works? Where is the Works to help Miss Lucy?"

"Jess you keep yer grip onto de Faith," his wife would respond, "an' de Works will jussumfy, when de day of jussumfication comes."

So Lucy grew up a grave, sad, lonely young girl. Her heart was undeveloped, for she had no one but her mother to love. She loved there, with little response. Her mother received, and did not repel, her love. That was enough for this affectionate nature. As to sympathy, they were strangers.

“She seems to me bitterly cold, when I love her so dearly,” Lucy would say to herself; “but how can I wonder? My father’s wrong-doing has broken her heart. Her life must be mere endurance. Mine would be, if I were so disappointed in one I loved. It is now.”

And the poor child’s heart would sink, and her eyes fill, and thick darkness come over her future.

She lived a sadly lonely life. She could never be merry as other girls. There was a miserable sense of guilt oppressing her soul. The supposed crimes of her father — those unknown enormities — weighed upon her. These, she thought, were what made many good people a little shy of the Brothertoft household. She could not fail to perceive a vague something in which her mother’s house was different from other houses she was permitted slightly to know. Why were so many odious men familiar there? When the family were in town, she could avoid them, day and evening, and spend long hours

unnoticed and forgotten in her own chamber. She could escape to books or needlework. But why did her mother tolerate these coarse men from the barracks, with their Tom, Dick, and Harry talk? To be sure these were days of war, and Mrs. Brothertoft was loyal in her sympathies, though non-committal, and "She may think it right," thought Lucy, "to show her loyalty in the only way a woman can, by hospitality. But I am glad she does not expect me to help her entertain her guests. I am glad I am a child still. I hope I shall never be a woman."

Her life took a sombre cast. She sank into a groove, and moved through the hours of her days a forlorn and neglected creature.

"Queer!" Julia Peartree Smith would say of her. "A little weak here," and Julia touched her forehead, just below her chestnut front. "She is a Brothertoft, and they were always feeble-minded folk, you know. But perhaps it's just as well," — and Julia sank her voice to a mean whisper, — "just as well she should n't be too sharp-sighted in *that* house. I really believe the silly chit loves her mother, and thinks her as good as anybody. I tried to give her a half-hint once, but the little fool fired up red-hot and said, I was a shameful old gossip, — 'old,' indeed!"

So Lucy lived, utterly innocent of any dream

of the evil she was escaping. There is something sadly beautiful and touching in this spectacle. A moonlit cloud flitting over the streets of a great wicked city, pausing above foul courts where vice slinks and crime cowers, reflected in the eddies of the tainted river,— the same eddy that was cleft at solemn moonrise by a suicide,— this west of gentle cloud is not more unconscious of all the sin and shame beneath it, than Lucy of any wrong. The cloud beholds the pure moon, and drifts along unsullied; Lucy saw only her own white and virginal faith. It was not a warming, cheering luminary; but it shed over her world the gray, resigned light of patience.

A touching sight! the more so, because we know that the character will develop, and, when it is ripe enough to bear maturer sorrows and to perceive a darker shame, that the eyes will open and the sorrow and shame will be revealed, standing where they have so long stood unseen.

After this little glimpse of Lucy's life, monotonously patient for the want of love, Voltaire takes up his narration again.

Voltaire thought Mrs. Brothertoft had determined to marry off Miss Lucy to Major Kerr as long ago as last spring, before they left town. She did not, however, announce her plans until they were in the country. She probably knew

that this was a case where the betrothed had better not see too much of each other.

"I remember the day," says the negro, "when Miss Lucy began to mope. Roses was comin' in strong. She used to fill the house with 'em. Sometimes she 'd sing a little, while she was fixin' 'em. But from that day out, she's never teched a flower nor sung a word. She's just moped."

By and by Voltaire had discovered the reason.

It was the wreath of mock orange-flowers dangled over Lucy's head by a false Cupid, Anteros himself, that had taught her to hate roses and every summer bloom. Her faint songs were still because her heart was sick. The bridegroom was coming, and her mother had notified the bride to put on her prettiest smile. This command was given in Mrs. Brothertoft's short, despotic way. Neither side argued. Lucy prepared to obey, just as she would have thrust a thorn in her foot, or swallowed a coal, upon order. She was not so very happy. She could be a little more unhappy without an unbearable shock. Major Kerr did not disgust her so much as some of her mother's intimates. Still the prospect was not charming. The summer roses lost color to her eyes. Color left the cheeks that once rivalled the roses. The bride did not try to smile. Smiles are smiles only when the heart

pulls the wires. It takes practice to work the grimace out of a forced smile, so that it may pass for genuine.

When was the bridegroom coming ? That information the bridegroom himself, though Sir Henry Clinton's Adjutant, could not yet precisely give. "We are soon to make a blow at the Highlands,—then you will see me,"—so he wrote, and sent the message in a silver bullet. Silver bullets, walnuts split and glued together, and stuffed with pithy notes instead of kernels, and all manner of treacherous tokens, passed between Brothertoft Manor and the Red outposts. Whether facts leaked out from leaky old Put when glasses too many of the Brothertoft Yellow-seal were under his belt ; whatever true or false intelligence Scrammel paid for his post on Miss Lucy's sofa, — every such fact was presently sneaking away southward in the pocket of young Bilsby, or some other Tory tenant on the Manor.

"I saw Miss Lucy mopin' and mopin' worse and worse," says Voltaire, "but I could n't do nothin', and there I sot in the pantry, like a dumb hoppertoad, watchin' a child walkin' up to a rattlesnake."

Voltaire's Faith without Works was almost dead.

Young Bilsby must have sneaked up to Brothertoft Manor with the news of Clinton's expedi-

tion to the relief of Burgoyne, just at the time that Mr. Brothertoft's announcement of his presence at Fishkill reached Voltaire.

"I did not dare tell Miss Lucy her father was so near," says the major-domo, "until, all at once, on the fourth of this month, we saw King George's ships lying off King's Ferry; and by and by up the hill comes Major Kerr to the Manor-House, red as a beet."

Upon this arrival, Lucy first fully comprehended what misery the maternal fiat was to bring upon her. Voltaire found her weeping and utterly desolate. At once his Faith worked out words. The dumb hoppertoad found voice to croak, "Ware rattlesnake!"

"You are going to be married, Miss Lucy?" he asked.

She wanted sympathy sadly, poor child! As soon as he spoke, she made a tableau and a scene,—both tragic. She laid her head on the old fellow's shoulder,—Tableau. She burst into tears,—Scene.

Woolly wig and black phiz bent over fair hair and pale face. Delicate lips of a fine old Lincolnshire stock murmured a plaint. Thick lips of coarse old African stock muttered a vow of devotion. A little, high-bred hand, veined with *sangre azul*, yielded itself to the leathery pressure of a brown paw. Ah, poor child! she had

need of a friend, and was not critical as to color.

“To be married?” Lucy responded, when sobs would let her speak. “Yes, Voltaire, in three or four days.”

“Time’s short as Sappho’s best pie-crust.”

“Mother says,” continued the young lady, “that I must have a protector. The Major is here now, and may be ordered up or down any day. Mother says it is providential, and we must take advantage of the opportunity, and be married at once.”

She looked very little like a bride, with her sad, shrinking face.

“Don’t you love Major Kerr?” asked Voltaire. “Lub” he always must pronounce this liquid verb.

“Do I love him, Voltaire? I hope to when we are married. Mother says I will. She says the ceremony and the ring will make another person of me. She says she has chosen me an excellent match, and I must be satisfied. O Voltaire! it seems a sin to say it, but my mother is cold and harsh with me. Perhaps I do not understand her. If I only had some other friend!”

“You have,” Voltaire announced.

“You—I know,” she said, kindly.

“Closer—miles closer ‘n me!”

“Who? Do you mean any one of our loyalist neighbors?”

Lucy ran her thought over her short list of friends. All the valued names had been expunged by her mother’s strict censorship, or pushed back among mere acquaintance.

“Have you forgotten your father?” the butler asked.

“Forgotten! I go every day, when no one is by, and lift up the corner of the curtain over the Vandyck. Our ancestor is my father himself. I look at him, and pray God to forgive him for being so wicked, and breaking my mother’s heart.”

“Poh!”

Lucy drew back in astonishment, as if a Paixhan blow-gun had exploded at her side.

“Poh!” again burst out Voltaire’s double-corked indignation. “If there was a wicked one in that pair, it was n’t him. If there’s a heart broke, it’s his.”

Lucy for a moment did not think of this as an assault upon her mother.

“What, Voltaire!” she cried. “He is not dead! Not a bad man! Not a rebel!”

“Rebel!” says the French radical’s namesake. “Why should n’t he be a rebel for Freedom? Bad! he ain’t bad enough to marry off his daughter only to git shet of her. Dead!

No, Miss Lucy ; he 's up to Fishkill, and sends you his lub by me, if you want it."

Love — even disguised as " Lub " — it was such a fair angel of light, that Lucy looked up and greeted it with a smile. But this was not a day for smiles. Storms were come after long gray weather. Only tears now, — bitter tears ! They must flow, sweet sister ! It is the old, old story.

" Does he really love me ? Is this true ? Was he true ? Was I deceived ? Why did he and my mother separate ? Why did she drive him out ? Whom can I trust ? Is every one a liar ? What does this mean ? Answer me, Voltaire ! Answer me, or I shall die."

Voltaire looked, and did not answer. To answer was a terrible revelation to make to this innocent girl. Faith was putting the old fellow to very cruel Works.

" Speak ! " said Lucy again, more passionately than before, and her voice expressed the birth of a new force within her. " Speak ! What have you to say of my mother ? I dread some new sorrow. Tell me what it is, or I shall die."

Again these pages refuse to listen to the few deplorable words of his reply. He whispered the secret of her mother's disloyal life.

" I will not believe it, " said the horror-stricken girl.

She did believe it.

She had touched the clew. From this moment she knew the past and the present,—vaguely, as a pure soul may know the mystery of sin.

For the moment she felt herself crushed to a deeper despair than before. She recognized the great overpowering urgency of Fate. She could not know that this recognition marks to the soul its first step into conscious immortality; and that the inevitable struggle to conquer Fate must now begin in her soul.

“What can I do?” she said; and she looked guiltily about the chamber, as if every object in that house were the accomplice of a sin.

“Run away with me to your father!” said Voltaire.

She shook her head weakly. She was a great, great way yet from any such exploit with her infant will.

“No,” she said; “I must obey my mother. That is my plain duty. She is pledged and I am pledged to this marriage. I must submit.” Tears again, poor child! The old habits are still too strong for her.

“But suppose your father should tell you to obey him, and not submit,” Voltaire propounded. “Suppose he should help to run you off.”

“How can he?”

“I will steal off to-night to Fishkill, and see him.”

“ You risk your life.”

“ Poh !”

“ Poh !” is not a word to use to a young lady, Mr. Voltaire. Yet perhaps nothing could express so well as that explosive syllable how much and how little he valued life when the lady’s happiness was at stake.

“ But I did n’t want Miss Lucy to be frightened, of course,” says he to Major Skerrett, “ so I told her that I was safe enough in the Highlands, and when I got here I did n’t believe Major Scrammel would let me be shot for a spy.”

Here he gave a monstrous sly look.

Peter Skerrett again felt his cheeks burn, and his forehead tingle, and the stilled Muse of History reports that “ he uttered a phrase indicative of reprehension and distrust.”

In short, he said to himself, “ Scrammel ! damn the fellow !”

Certainly ! Why not ? But it must not be forgotten, that it is Scrammel who suggested this expedition. Voltaire told Scrammel of the marriage. Scrammel, as our peep into friend Livingston’s brain informed us, would do one of his meanest tricks to be himself the bridegroom. And his scheme seems to be in a fair way to forbid the banns.

And so guileless Lucy Brothertoft had consented to her first plot. Her accomplice was to

shift the burden of weakness from her shoulders, and throw it upon her father. Meantime she was to take her place at the great dinner-party, and be a hypocrite for the first time. How guilty felt that innocent heart! How she dreaded lest some chance word or look might betray her! What torture was the burning blush in her cheeks as she began to comprehend the woman she must name mother! How she trembled lest that woman's cruel eyes should pierce her bosom, see the secret there, and consign her, without even the appointed delay, to the ardent bridegroom. She knew that she should yield and obey. Now that for the first time she was eager to have a will of her own, she saw how untrained and inefficient this will was. Horror of her mother, and loathing of her betrothed, each repelled her in turn. She seemed to see herself praying for mercy to the woman, and she coldly refusing to listen; then flying across the stage, and supplicating the man to spare her, and he, instead, triumphing with coarse fondness. Ah, unhappy lady! with no friend except that stout-hearted old squire, shinning by night through the Highlands, and dodging sentries at risk of a shot,—a shot, that startling trochee, sharp *ictus*, and faint whiz.

Except for the Majors,—Scrammel to plot, Skerrett to execute,—Voltaire's evasion would

have been in vain. Edwin Brothertoft was paralyzed by the news of his daughter's danger.

“What can I do?” he said to the old servant, bitterly. “Nothing! Nothing! Is General Putnam, just defeated, likely to march down to rescue my daughter? These are not the days of chivalry. Knights do not come at call, when damsels are in distress. No; I am impotent to help her. If she cannot help herself, her heart must break, as mine has broken. That base woman will crush her life, as she crushed mine. Why did you come to me? You have brought me news that I may love my daughter, only to make the new love a cause of deeper misery. Why did you tell me of this insult to her womanhood? I had enough to endure before. Go! What can I say to her? She will not care for a futile message, ‘that I love her, but can do nothing.’ Some stronger head than mine might devise a plan. Some stronger heart might dare. But I have given up. I am a defeated man,—a broken-hearted man, living from day to day, and incompetent to vigor. I remember myself another person. I sometimes feel the old fire stir and go out. But I can do nothing. My fate and my daughter's fate are one. Go, Voltaire, and leave me to my utter sorrow and despair!”

He had but just dismissed the negro, and

turned a despondent back upon the world,—when lo! Peter Skerrett, as we saw him, comes forth. Here comes the Captor of Captives, the Hero of Ballads! Here come chivalry, youth, ardor, force, confidence, success, all in a body,—a regiment of victor traits in one man, and on that man's lip THE MOUSTACHE, the best in the Continental army. Here comes a man whose timepiece has never learnt to mark “Too late.” Here he comes, and he has made it his business to eliminate Kerr from the problem of Brothertoft Manor ; so that Kerr + Lucy = Bliss will be for a time an impossible equation.

Take courage, then, Edwin Brothertoft, tender of heart, sick at will, and thank Heaven that you married your gunstock to the brainpan of that British beggar with a baggonet at Bunker Hill, and so saved Skerrett to help you.

Voltaire's story, with additions and improvements, now ends, and business proceeds.

VII.

“AFTER this history, I want a little topography,” said Skerrett. “Can you sketch me a ground plan of the house?”

That skeleton, Brothertoft could draw without much feeling. The house, as it stood, complete in the background of memory, he would not allow himself to recall. Its walls and furniture were to him the unshifted scenes and properties of a tragedy. If he painted them before his mind’s eye, an evil-omened figure of a woman would step from behind the curtain, threatening some final horror, to close the drama of their lives.

“This wing to the right,” Skerrett said, “seems an addition.”

“It was built on by the present proprietress,” coldly rejoined the former heir.

“Stables here!” continued the Major, tracing the plan. “Dining-room windows open toward them. Shrubbery here, not too far off for an ambush. Now, Voltaire, if we could get Major Kerr alone in that dining-room in the dusk

of the evening to-morrow, I could walk him off easily.”

“Ho!” exclaims the butler. “That’s all settled beforehand.”

“Kerr sometimes makes late sittings there, then? I fancied I knew his habits.”

“He’s a poor hand at courtin’,” says Voltaire, with contempt. “Ladies likes devotion,—that’s my ‘sperience. He’s only dewoted to fillin’ hisself full of wine.”

“A two-bottle man?”

“Every day, when the ladies leave table, he rubs his hands,” — Voltaire imitates, — “and says, ‘Now then, old boy, fresh bottle! Yellow-seal! Don’t shake him!’ He drinks that pretty slow, and gives me a glass and says, ‘Woolly-head, we’ll drink my pretty Lucy. Lucky Kerr’s pretty bride!’”

Peter Skerrett here looked ferocious.

“Then,” continued the old fellow, “he drops off asleep at the table till four o’clock. Then he wakes up, sour, and sings out,” — Voltaire imitates, — “‘Hullo, you dam nigger! Look sharp! Another bottle! If you shake him, I’ll cut your black heart out.’ He drinks him, and then byme-by he says, ‘Ole fel! Shmore wide, ole fel. Tuther boddle dow! I ashkitspussonle favor, ole fel!’ Then he sings a little, and gets ‘generally accelerated.’”

"I would rather have him slowed, than accelerated," says Peter.

"Oho!" grinned the butler, and whispered to himself, "If the Major thinks he ought to be stupid-t tipsy for the good of the cause and Miss Lucy, I can deteriorate him, into his Madeira, with a little drop of our French Gutter de Rosy brandy. That will take the starch out of his legs, and make him easy to handle. But that is my business. I won't tell nobody my secrets. The pantry and I must keep dark."

"I cannot help a grain of compunction in this matter," Skerrett said. "A gentleman does not like to interfere in another man's courtship."

"Do you call this plot of a coarse man with an unmotherly woman by the fair name of courtship?" Brothertoft said.

"No. And fortunately the lady has no illusions. I should not like to be the one to tell Beauty she had loved Beast. But this Beauty, it seems, has kept her heart too pure to have lost her fine maidenly instinct of aversion to a blackguard. Well, no more metaphysics! Scruples be hanged. Kerr don't deserve to be treated like a gentleman. England should have kept such fellows at home, if she wanted us to believe good manners were possible under a monarchy. Now, then, Mr. Brothertoft, suppose I do not

get myself ‘hanged as one espy,’ and take my prisoner,— does his capture protect your daughter enough ? ”

“ I could wish, if it were possible, to have her with me henceforth.”

“ We must make it possible, though it complicates matters. I could rush in, snatch Kerr, and be off. The blow would be struck, the enemy annoyed, our people amused; but in a fortnight Clinton would offer some Yankee major and a brace of captains to boot for his Adjutant, the Honorable, &c. Then he would go down and play Beast to Beauty again.”

“ Save my daughter, once for all ; if it can be done.”

“ I ’ll try. Now, Voltaire, listen ! ”

Which he opened his mouth to do.

“ What people, besides the two ladies and Major Kerr, will be at your house to-morrow evening,— the servants, I mean ? ”

“ Oh ! we live small at the Manor, now,— ridiculous small. It ’s war times now. Rents is n’t paid. When we want a proper lot of servants, we takes clodhoppers.”

“ Lucky for my plans you do live small,” Skerrett said. “ Never mind your family pride ! Name the household ! ”

“ Me and Sappho and Plato, all patriots ; Jierck Dewitt’s wife and her sister, Sally Bilsby,

both Tories,—that is, gals that likes redcoats more than is good for 'em."

"Could you manage to have the girls out of the way to-morrow evening?"

"Easy enough. They 'll be glad to get away for a frolic."

"Any horses in your stable, Voltaire?"

"Six,—all out of that Harriet Heriot mare stock. You remember, Master Edwin."

Edwin Brothertoft did sadly remember the late old Sam Galsworthy's generous offer. He remembered sadly that ride, so many years ago, and how the sweet south winds, laden with the rustle of tropic palms, met him with fair omen,—ah! long ago, when Faith was blind and Hope was young!

"Six white horses," Voltaire continued; "the four carriage-horses, Madam's horse, and Miss Lucy's mare,—you ought to see Miss Lucy on her!"

"Perhaps I shall. Tell Plato to give the mare another oat to-morrow! Her mistress may want a canter in the evening,—eh, Voltaire?"

Grin in response.

"Tell Miss Brothertoft, with her father's best love," Skerrett resumed, "that he will be on the lawn by the dining-room window to-morrow evening at nine o'clock, waiting for her to ride with him to Fishkill. Tell her to be brave, pru-

dent, and keep out of sight with a headache, until she is called to start. And you, Voltaire, as you love her, be cautious, be secret and be wide awake ! ”

At “ be cautious,” the old fellow winked elaborately. At “ be secret,” he locked all four eyelids tight. At “ be wide awake,” — snap ! eyelids flung open, and white of eye enough appeared to dazzle a sharpshooter.

“ Now, listen, Voltaire ! ”

Mouth agape, again, as if he had a tympanum at each tonsil.

“ Look at me, carefully ! ” continues Peter.

Pan shut and eyes *à la* saucer.

“ Do you think you would know me disguised in a red coat ? ”

Pan opened to explode, “ Certain sure, sir ! ”

“ And without my moustache ? ” the major asked.

He gave that feature a tender twirl. His fingers wrapped the fair tendrils lovingly around them.

“ Must it go ? ” he sighed. “ O Chivalry ! O Liberty ! O my Country ! what sacrifices you demand ! ”

Voltaire was sure that he would know the Hero, even with an emasculated lip.

“ Well ; about eight to-morrow evening, when Major Kerr is ‘ accelerated ’ with his second

bottle, I shall knock at your loyal door, — moustache off, and red coat on — and ask a night's lodging for a benighted British sergeant."

" You shall have it," says the major-domo, with a grand-seigneur manner.

" Nothing but apple-jack or Jersey champagne has passed these lips, since we lost the Brandywine. You will naturally give me my bottle of Yellow-seal, and my bite of supper, in the dining-room with the Major."

" Oh ! " cried Voltaire with sudden panic. " Don't risk it ! Major Kerr 's got a sword awful long and awful sharp, and two pistols with gold handles, plum full of bullets. Every day, when he drinks, he puts 'em on the sideboard, an' he say, ' Lookerheeyar, ole darkey ! spose dam reble cum, I stick him, so ; an' I shoot him, so.' Don't resk it, Mas'r Skerrett ! "

(Ancient servitor, suppress thy terror and thy Tombigbee together !)

" Slip off with the weapons, and hide 'em in your bed," says the Major.

" In my bed ? " says Voltaire, in good Continental again. " In our feather bed ? Suppose Sappho goes to lie down, and touches cold iron, wont she take on scollops, high ? "

" The poetess must not be taught to strike a jangling lyre. Give the tools to Plato. Set him on guard at the dining-room door when

I come. Tell him he is serving a model Republic,—such as his ancient namesake never dreamed."

Brothertoft smiled at these classical allusions. Lively talk was encouraging him, as his junior meant it should.

Neither foresaw what a ghastly mischief was to follow this arming of Plato.

VIII.

“Now, Voltaire, the sooner you are on your way back, to warn and comfort your young lady, the better,” said Skerrett. “I’m sorry for your shins among the Highlands by night.”

“Never mind my shins,” Voltaire replied with a martyr air. “They belong to my country and Miss Lucy.”

He passed his hand tenderly along their curvilinear edges, as if he were feeling a scymitar, before a blow. They were sadly nicked, poor things! They would be lacerated anew, as he brandished them at the briars, and smote with them the stumps along his twenty-mile anabasis.

“Farewell, my trump of trumps,” said the Major. “Remember; be cautious, be secret, be wide awake!”

Same pantomime as before in reply.

“If Mrs. Brothertoft suspects anything, there will be tragedy,” Peter continued.

So all three knew, and shuddered to think.

“I will walk a little way with my friend,”

said Brothertoft, "I have a more hopeful message now to send to my dear child."

Peter watched the two contrasted figures until they disappeared in the glow of the many-colored forest.

"Lovely old gentleman!" he thought. "Yes; 'lovely' is the word. My first encounter with a broken heart. It has stopped my glee for a long time to come. I have felt tears in my eyes, all the while, and only kept them down by talking low comedy with the serio-comic black personage. Can a broken heart be mended? That is always woman's work, I suppose. In this case, too, woman broke, woman must repair. The daughter must make over what the wife spoilt. She shall be saved for his sake and her own, even if I come out of the business an amputated torso. I don't quite comprehend people that cannot help themselves. But here I see the fact,—there are such. And I suppose exuberant chaps, like myself, are put in the world to help them. I wonder whether any woman will break my heart! I wonder whether Miss Lucy liked any of our fellows, and had a hero in her eye to make Kerr look more caitiff than he is. Could not be Scrammel,—he is a sneak. Could not be Radière,—he is too dyspeptic. Nor Humphreys,—too pompous. Nor Livingston,—he is not sentimental

enough. Nor Skerrett,—him she has never seen and will see with his moustache off. Ah! the Chief was right when he told me I should put my foot into some adventure up here. And now the thing is started, I must set it moving."

He walked toward Jierck Dewitt, still on guard at the gate. His relief was just coming up, and the sentry was at liberty.

"Did you know those two men I was talking with, by the well, Jierck?" Peter asked.

"Yes, sir; Sergeant Lincoln and Lady Brothertoft's factotum. I'd like to know what old Voltaire wanted here."

"He does not recognize the ex-Patroon," Skerrett thought. "Then no one will. Jierck's eyes always saw a little lighter in the dark, and a little steadier in a glare, than the next man's. Sorrow must have clapped a thick mask on my friend's face."

"I suppose you know the Brothertoft Manor country and the Manor-House thoroughly, Jierck," the Major said.

"Know the Manor, sir! I should think so. I began with chasing tumble-bugs and crickets over it, and studied it inch by inch. Then I trailed black-snakes and ran rabbits, and got to know it rod by rod. I've fished in every brook, and clumb every nut-tree, and poked into every woodcock swamp or partridge brush from end

to end of it. I know it, woodland and clearing, side-hill and swale, fields that grow stun and fields that grow corn. I 've run horses over it, where horses is to be run,—and that 's not much, for its awful humpy country, and boulders won't stay put anywheres. Deer, too,—there ain't many pieces of woods on it where I have n't routed out deers, and when they legged for the Highlands, I legged too, and come to know the Highlands just as well. I used to love, when I was a boy, to go along on the heights above the river, and pick out places where I was going to live; but I sha'n't live in any of 'em now. What does a man care about home, or living at all, when his woman is n't true?"

Major Skerrett did not interrupt this burst of remembrances. "Jierck suffers as much in his way," he thought, "as the ex-Patroon." "And the house," he said, "you know that as thoroughly?"

"Ay, from garret to cellar. My father, Squire Dewitt, has been in England, and he says it 's more like an English house than any he knows, in small. From garret to cellar, says I. The cellar I ought to know pretty well. I dodged in there once, when I was a boy, hangin' round the house; and got into the wine-room, and drank stuff that came near spoilin' my taste for rum forever,—I wish it had. They caught

me, and the Madam had me whipped till the blood come. Mr. Brothertoft tried to beg off for me. She 'd got not to make much of him by that time, and the more he begged, the harder she had 'em lay it on me. But I 'm talkin' off, stiddy as the North River, and you 've got something to say to me, Major, I know, by the way you look. What 's up about Brothertoft Manor?"

"There 's a British officer staying there, who has never tasted pork and beans. I 've promised General Putnam to bring him up here to dinner."

"Hooray! that 's right. Give these militia something to think about, or they get to believe war 's like general trainin'-day, and they can cut for home when they 're tired. You want volunteers. I 'm one."

"I counted on you for my lieutenant. Sergeant Lincoln also goes. Now I want three men more, and you shall choose them. Each man must have the grit of a hundred; and they must know the country as well as they know the way to breakfast. Name three, Jierck!"

"That I 'll do, bang. There 's Ike Van Wart, for one. His junto, him and Jack Paulding and Dave Williams, would just make the three. But Jack 's nabbed, and down to York in a prison-ship. And Dave 's off on furlough, sowing his

father's winter wheat for the Cowboys to tromp next summer."

Only Isaac Van Wart, therefore, of that famous trio, whom the Muse of Tradition shall fondly nickname

MAJOR ANDRE'S BOOTJACK,

joined Skerrett on his perilous service.

"Ike for one," continued Dewitt. "Well, Galsworthy, old Sam Galsworthy, for two. And for three, I don't believe a better man lives than Hendrecus Canady, the root-doctor's son. They're all Brothertoft-Manor boys, built of the best cast-steel, and strung with the wiriest kind of wire. Shoot bullets into 'em, stick baggonets into 'em; they don't mind the bullets any more than spit-balls at school, nor the baggonets more than witches do pins."

"Well, Jierck, have them here in an hour. I will join you, and talk the trip over, and we will be ready to start at sunset."

Skerrett found himself a horse, trotted back to Fishkill, wrote a farewell to his step-brother and his mother, and scratched a few irrepressible lines to Washington, such as the hero loved to get from his boys, and valued much more than lumbering despatches marked Official. The despatches only announced facts, good or bad. The brisk, gallant notes revealed spirits which black

facts could not darken, nor heavy facts depress. "So long as I have lads like Peter Skerrett," thought Our George, by the grace of God Pater Patriæ, when he received this note, a fortnight after that cup-lip-and-slip battle of Germantown, "while I have such lads with me, I can leave my red paint in my saddle-bags with my Tuscarora grammar."

"Now," thought Peter, "I have made my will and written my despatch, I must proceed to change myself into a redcoat."

He unpacked a British sergeant's uniform, which he had carried, if disguise should be needed in his late solitary journey.

"There is a garment," said he, holding up the coat with an air of respect, "whose pockets have felt the King's shilling. But thy pockets, old buff and blue!" — he stripped off his own coat, — "never knew bullion, though often stuffed with Continental paper at a pistareen the pound avoirdupois."

His weather-beaten scarlets were much too small for the tall champion. By spasm and pause, and spasm again, however, he managed to squeeze into them at last.

Then he took Mrs. Birdsell's little equilateral triangle of mirror, three inches to a side, and, holding it off at arm's length, surveyed himself by sections.

"The color don't suit my complexion," he said, viewing his head and neck. "The coat will not button over my manly chest, and I shall have to make it fast with a lanyard," — here he took a view of the rib-region. "The tails are simply ridiculous," — he twisted about to bring the glass to bear upon them. "In short," — and he ran the bit of mirror up and down, — "I am a scarecrow, *cap à pie*. Liberty herself would not know me. Pretty costume to go and see a lady in! Confound women! Why will wives break husband's hearts? Why will girls grow up beauties and heiresses, and become baits for brutes? Ah, Miss Lucy Brothertoft! You do not know what an inglorious rig Peter Skerrett is submitting to for your sake. And the worst is to come. Alas! the worst must come!"

He hoisted the looking-glass and gazed for a moment irresolutely at his face.

There, in its accustomed place, sat The Moustache, blonde in color, heroic in curl, underscoring his firm nose, pointing and adorning the handsome visage.

Skerrett gazed, sighed, and was silent.

Nerve him, Liberty! Steel him, Chivalry!

A hard look crept over his countenance.

He clutched a short blade, pointless; but with an edge trenchant as wit.

It was a razor.

Slash! And one wing of The Moustache was swept from the field.

Behold him, trophy in hand and miserable that he has won it!

Will resolution carry him through a second assault? Or will he go one-sided; under one nostril a golden wreath, under the other, bristles, for a six-month?

Slash! The assassination is complete.

His lip is scalped. All is bald between his nose and mouth. The emphasis is subtracted from his countenance. His upper lip, no longer kept in place by its appropriate back-load, now flies up and becomes seamed with wrinkles.

And there on the table lay The Moustache!

There they lay,—the right flank and the left flank, side by side in their old posture,—the mere exuviae of a diminished hero.

Peter turned away weakly as a Samson shorn.

“Ah, Liberty! Ah, Chivalry!” he moaned. “Will the good time to come make a sacred relic of these yellow tufts?”

Tradition reports that his hostess found them, and buried them, in an old tinder-box, in the Fishkill village graveyard, where they sleep among other exuviae, arms, legs, torsos, and bodies of the heroes of that time.

And now it may be divined why De Chastel-

lux does not immortalize the Skerrett Moustache. Perhaps Peter kept his lip in mourning until after the surrender of Cornwallis. Perhaps, alas! they never grew again.

“It will take gallons on gallons of this October to put me in good spirits again,” says the Major, as he rode away.

The mellow air, all sweetness, all sparkle, and all perfume, flowed up to his lips, generously. He breathed, and breathed, and breathed again of that free tap, and by the time he reached the rendezvous was buoyant as ever.

The Orderly, Brothertoft, was awaiting him, and sat patient, but no longer despondent, looking through the bulky Highlands, as if they were the mountains of a dream.

Jierck Dewitt and his Three were skylarking in a pumpkin patch. Twenty years ago we saw the same three, straddling and spurring tombstones in the Brothertoft Manor graveyard, the day of the last Patroon’s funeral,—the day when Old Van Courtlandt made a Delphic Apollo of him, and foretold, amid general clink of glasses, that marriage of white promise and black performance.

“The child is father of the man”; and the four boys have grown up as their fathers’ children should.

Jierck Dewitt has already shown himself, and

related why he is not fully up to his mark of manliness.

When he caught sight of Major Skerrett, he dropped a yellow bomb, charged with possible pumpkin-pies, which he was about to toss at the head of one of his men, and marched the file up to be reviewed by its leader.

“Number one is Ike Van Wart, Major,” says Jierck. “His eyes are peeled, if there’s any eyes got their bark off in the whole Thirteen.”

Ike touched his cocked hat—it was his only bit of uniform—and squared shoulders to be looked at.

He was a lank personage, of shrewd, but rather sanctimonious visage. War made him a scout. Fate appointed him one prong of Major André’s Bootjack. But Elder and Chorister were written on his face; and he died Elder and Chorister of the First Presbyterian Church of Greenburgh, in Westchester.

“Right about face, Ike!” says Jierck. “Forrud march, Old Sam Galsworthy! He’s grit, if grit grows. His only fault is he’s too good-natured to live.”

Old Sam stood forward, and laughed. As he laughed, the last button flew off his uniform coat. It was much too lean a coat for one of his increasing diameter, and the exit of that final button had long been merely a question

of time. Hearty Old Sam may be best described by pointing to his descendants, who in our day are the identical Sam, repeated. Under thirty, they drive high-stepping bays in the wagons of the great Express Companies. They wear ruddy cheeks, chinny beards, natty clothes, blue caps with a gilt button; and rattle their drags through from Flatten Barrack, up Broadway and back, at 2 P. M., without hitting a hub or cursing a carter. Everybody says Old Sam is too good-natured to live! But he does live and thrive, and puts flesh on his flesh, and dollars on his pile. Over thirty, he marries, as becomes a Galsworthy, buys acres up the river, raises red-cheeked apples and children, breeds high-stepping bays, and when he takes his annual nag to the Bull's Head for sale, the knowing men there make bets, and win them, that Old Squire Sam weighs at least two hundred and forty pounds with his coat off.

“Right about face, Sam!” says the fugleman. “Forrud march, Hendrecus Canady! He looks peakèd, Major. His father’s a root and Injun doctor, and he never had much but pills to eat, until he ran off and joined the army. But I stump the whole Thirteen to show me a wirier boy, or a longer head. He’ll be in Congress before he says ‘Die’ through that nose of his’n.”

Hendrecus Canady in turn toed the mark for

inspection. He had a sallow, potticary face. A meagre yellow down on his cheeks grew to a point at his chin. But he is neatly dressed in half-uniform. He has a keen look, which will say, "Stand and deliver your fact!" to every phenomenon. He will, indeed, talk through his nose, until his spirit passes by that exit to climes where there are no noses to twang by. But wiry men must be had when states need bracing. And the root-doctor's runaway son was M. C. long before his beak intoned his *Nunc dimittis*.

"Now, boys," said Skerrett, "I like your looks, and I like what Captain Jierck says of you. You know what we 've got to do, and know it must be done. You 'll travel, scattering, according to Jierck's orders, and rendezvous before moon-rise at his father's barn on the Manor. Sergeant Lincoln goes with me. Jierck will name a place where he 'll meet me at sunrise. We shall have all day to-morrow to see how the land lies, and the night to do our job in. Now, then, shake hands round, and go ahead!"

PART III.

I.

FOR the first time in her life Lucy Brothertoft failed to kiss her mother on the morning of the dinner to Sir Henry Clinton.

A great pang went to the guilty woman's heart.

She perceived that her daughter knew her at last.

Ah, miserable woman ! She did not dare turn her great black eyes reproachfully upon Lucy, and demand the omitted caress.

She did not dare say tenderly, " What, my daughter, are you forgetting me ? "

She did not dare go forward and press her own unworthy lips to those virgin lips.

For one instant a great tumult of love and remorse stirred within her. She longed to fling herself on her knees before her daughter, to bury her face in Lucy's lap, and there, with tears and agony, cry out : —

" O my child ! pity me, do not hate me, for the lie I have been. Ah ! you do not know the misery of wearing an undetected falsehood in

the heart! You do not know the torture of hypocrisy. You do not know how miserably base it is to be loved for what you are not,— to be trusted as a true and loyal heart, when every moment of such false pretence is another film of falsehood over the deep-seated lie. You cannot know how we tacit liars long for betrayal, while we shrink and shudder when it approaches!

“And you, my gentle daughter, have been my vengeance. Listen to me now! The old pride breaks. The old horror passes. I confess. Before you, the very image of my husband in his young and hopeful days, I confess my shameful sin. I have been a foul wife and a false mother. Do not scorn me, Lucy. I have suffered, and shall suffer till I die.

“Ah! thank Heaven, my child, that you do not feel and cannot divine half my degradation. My agony you see,—let it be the lesson of your life! Here I hide my face, and dare to recall that brave and noble lover, your father. So gentle he was, so tender, so utterly trustful! And I was mean enough to think he triumphed over me because his soul was fine, and mine was coarse. So I took my coarse revenge.

“O fool, fool! that I could not comprehend that pure and lofty nature. O base! that I must grovel and rank myself with the base. O

cruel! that I must trample upon him. O dastardly! for the unwomanly sneers, for the studied insults, by which I bore him down, and broke at last that high, chivalric heart. It seems to me that I was not sane, but mad all those miserable years.

“But now, my daughter, see me weep! I repent. My soul repents and loathes this guilty woman here. I have spoken, I have told you fully what I am. I look up. I see your father’s patient, pitying glance upon your face. Speak, with his voice, and say I may be slowly pardoned, if my penitence endures. And kiss me, Lucy! not my tainted lips; but kiss my forehead with a kiss of peace!”

Such a wild agony of love and remorse stirred within this wretched woman’s heart.

But she battled it down, down, down.

The virago in her struck the woman to the earth, and throttled her. No yielding. No tears. No repentance. She scorned the medicine of shame.

Lucy’s presence cowed her. She did not dare look at that gentle, earnest face, except covertly, and as an assassin looks.

The Furies, her old companions, thickened about her, like a mist pregnant with forms. There was a whispering in the air. Did others see those shadowy images? Did others hear

their words? To her they were loud and emphatic. "Stab the meek-faced girl! Be rid of this spy! Shall she sit there and shame you?"—so the Furies whispered and shouted. And the woman replied within herself: "Am I not stabbing her? See, here is my hired bravo, my future son-in-law, the very Honorable Major Kerr,—*le bel homme!*! He will give the puny thing troubles of her own to mind. We will see whether she is always to stay so meek and patient. We will see whether these Brothertofts are so much better than other people. She has learnt to suspect me at last. I knew the time would come, and I have made ready for it. Day after to-morrow they are to be married, and then I shall be rid of Miss Monitress."

With such passions at work, breakfast at Brothertoft, on the morning of Putnam's Council, and the dinner to Clinton, was not a very cheerful meal. Mother and daughter were silent. Kerr took his cue, and played knife and fork.

II.

LUCY left the room immediately after breakfast.

“My pretty Lucy seems to have the megrims,” said Major Kerr. “Is that on the cards for a blushing bride?”

“She sighs for the hour when Adonis shall name her his,” replied the mother, with a half-sneer.

“Confound it, Madam! I believe you are laughing at me,” the blowsy Adonis grumbled.

He lifted himself from the table, and swaggered off to the fire, with a gorged movement. He probably had never seen a turkey-buzzard lounging away from carrion; but he unconsciously imitated that unattractive fowl.

The *débris* of his meal, the husks of what he did eat, remained in an unpleasant huddle on the table, proving that a great, gross feeder had been there.

He stood before the fire, a big red object, the type of many Englishmen who were sent over in the Revolution to disenchant us with monarchy.

The chances are nearly ten to one in favor of an Englishman's being a gentleman. Our mother country seemed to have carefully decimated her civil and military service of its brutes, to do the dirty work of flogging the Continentals.

Kerr stood before the fire, making a picture of himself.

A handsomish animal ! Other women might call him *le bel homme* without Mrs. Brothertoft's tone of contempt. He had evidently given the artists of the alcoholic school — Brandy and that brotherhood — frequent sittings. They paint rubicund, and had not been chary of carnations in his case. His red uniform-jacket gave him the air of an overgrown boy. But not a frank, merry one ; nor even an oafish, well-meaning dolt of a chap. This great boy is a bully. Smaller urchins would suffer under his thumb. He would crush a butterfly, or, indeed, anything gentle and tender, without much ceremony.

So Mrs. Brothertoft seemed to think, as she surveyed him, posed there for inspection.

She smiled to herself, and thought, "This sensual tyrant will presently give Miss Lucy something else to do than insult me with her prudish airs."

"Dash it, Ma'am !" Kerr repeated, — his caste, in his time, dashed freely, — "do you mean to hint the girl is not fond of me ?"

“Fond ! she adores you. See how jealous she is ! She cannot leave you one moment.”

“I’d have you to know, Madam, with your sneers, that better blood than your daughter have been fond of me.”

“Why did n’t Adonis stay in the home market, then, instead of putting himself in the Provincial ?”

“You know why ! I don’t make any secret of my debts and my peccadillos. You know as much about me as I do about you, my mother-in-law.”

She winced a little at this coarse familiarity. It was part of her inevitable punishment to be so treated. Ah ! how bitterly she remembered, at such words, the reverent courtesy of her husband ! how bitterly, his pitying tenderness, even when she had dishonored him, so far as his honor was in her power ! But she hardened herself against these memories, and her vindictiveness against that daughter of his grew more cruel.

“You must allow,” continued Kerr, “that you get me dem cheap.”

“Cheap !” she rejoined. “Cheap with the debts and the peccadillos ! Cheap, white feather and all !”

“Who says I ever showed the white feather ?” roared Kerr. “That’s one of that *muscadin*, Jack André’s lies. He wants my place as Adju-

tant to Sir Henry. Bah ! the shop-keeping, play-acting, rhyme-writing milksop ! he 'd better keep his Swiss jaws shut, and not slander a British nobleman ! ”

“ Nobleman ! ” says his hostess, evidently taking pleasure in galling her conspirator ; “ I thought you were only a peer's third son.”

“ There are but three lives between me and the earldom,—an old gouty life, Tom's jockey life, and Dick's drunken one. Your daughter will be Countess of Bendigh one of these days, and you 'd both better be careful how you treat me.”

“ How could I treat you better ? ” I give you the prettiest girl in the Province, with the prettiest portion.”

“ Have I got to tell you again, that not every man would take *your* daughter ? You need n't look so fierce about it.”

She did look fierce. She looked—*la belle sauvage*—as if she could handle a scalping-knife. And no wonder ! This was not very pretty talk on either side.

It was not very pretty work they had plotted. Hate must have become very bitter in the mother's heart before she chose this brute and booby for her daughter's husband. She did not even perceive the dull spark of a better nature, not utterly quenched in him,—gross, dissolute, over-

bearing, heavy, that he was. She wished to be rid of Lucy Brothertoft,— this was the first thing. If, besides, she got an ally on the royalist side, and a son-in-law who could help her to a place in society in England, it was clear gain.

But enough of this conspiracy!

Will the father and that young rebel *sans* moustache be bold and speedy enough to defeat it?

III.

PLACE aux héros !

To-day the lady of Brothertoft Manor dines
Sir Henry Clinton and suite.

If General Putnam should ever march back,
and blame her that she gave aid and comfort
to the enemy, she will say that she was forced
to protect herself by a little sham hospitality.

It may be sham, but it is liberal. Sappho
contributes her most faithful soup. The river
gives a noble sturgeon,—and “Albany beef,”
treated as turbot, with sauce blanche, is fish
for anybody’s fork. The brooks supply trouts
by the bushel. The Highlands have provided
special venison for this festival. The Manor kills
its fatted calf, its sweetest mutton, its spright-
liest young turkey, fed on honeydew grasshop-
pers. There is a plum-pudding big as a pumpkin.
Alas that no patriot palate will vibrate to the
passing love-taps of these substantial good things !

All is ready, and Lady Brothertoft — so she
loves to be called — awaits her distinguished
guests, in her grandest attire.

But, calm and stately as she sits, there is now miserable panic and now cruel hate in her heart; for all the time she is whispering to herself.

“Lucy did not kiss me. It is the first time in all her life. Edwin Brothertoft’s daughter has discovered at last what I am. Did he come in a dream and tell her?”

Then she would raise her eyes as far as those fair hands lying in her daughter’s lap,—no higher, no higher, or the daughter would face her,—and think of the wedding-ring that her plot is presently to force upon one of those locked fingers. She could hardly keep back a scream of wild triumph at the thought.

So the mother sits, and holds her peace, such as it is. The daughter waits, in a strange dream of patience. Major Kerr swaggers about, admires his legs, feels embarrassed before his mute betrothed, looks at his watch and grumbles, “It’s half past two. Dinner’s three, sharp. The soup will be spoiled if they don’t show presently.”

They begin to show now upon the quarter-decks of the three frigates in the river. The guests, in full bloom of scarlet and gold, come up from cabin and ward-room of the *Tartar*, the *Preston*, and the *Mercury*. Jack on the forecastle has his joke, as each new figure struts forth, dodging whatever would stain or flavor

him tarry. The belated men call to their servants, "Bear a hand there, you lubber, with the flour for my hair-powder! How the devil did that spot come on my coat-sleeve! Why the devil did n't you have these ruffles starched?"

The last man now struggles into his tightest Hessians. The last man draws on his silk stockings. The last mans his pumps. Sir Henry Clinton comes out with Commodore Hotham. The captain's gig has been swinging half an hour in the shade of the frigate's hull. Present arms, sentry at the gangway! Here they come, down the black side of the ship. Fire and feathers, how splendid! Take care of your sword, Sir Henry, or you 'll trip and get a ducking instead of a dinner! They scuttle into the stern-sheets. The oarsmen, in their neatest holiday rig, scoff in their hearts, and name these great personages "lobsters" and "land-lubbers." The captain's coxswain, the prettiest man of the whole ship's company, gives the word, "Shove off!" Boat-hook shoves, Jack on deck peers through the port-holes. A topman, aloft, accidentally drops a tarry bit of spunyarn and hits Sir Henry on his biggish nose. "Back starboard," the pretty coxswain orders. "Pull port!" "Give way all!" And so we go to dinner! And so from men-of-war in our time heroes go to dinners ashore.

And now the gay party enters the dining-room at Brothertoft Manor.

How bright the sunbeams of the October afternoon, ricochetting from the smooth Hudson into the windows, gleam on the epaulets and buttons of a dozen gorgeous officers! One special ray is clearly detailed to signalize that star on Sir Henry Clinton's left breast. The room is aflame with scarlet. Certainly these flamboyant heroes will presently consume away every vestige of a rebel army. Surely, after a parry or two against these dress swords, the champions of freedom will drop their points and yield their necks to the halter. Each elaborate fine gentleman, too, of all this bandboxy company, is crowned with victor bays. They plucked them only t' other day across the river on the ramparts of Forts Clinton and Montgomery. When Jack Burgoyne sends down his bunch of laurel from Saratoga, the whole are to be tied up in one big bouquet, and despatched to tickle the nose and the heart of Farmer George at Windsor Castle.

Sir Henry Clinton — no less — *Cæsar ipse* — hands in the grand hostess, and takes his seat at her right. How jolly he looks, the fat little man! How his round face shines, and his protuberant nose begins to glow with inhaling the steam of the feast!

“I must have you on my left, Admiral,” says the hostess, to a hearty gentleman in naval uniform.

“Thank you for my promotion, Madam,” rejoins Commodore Hotham, dropping into his place.

At the head of her table, then, sits Lady Brothertoft, proud and handsome, flanked by the two chiefs. And down on either side the guests dispose themselves in belaurelled vista.

Major Kerr takes the foot of the table. He carves well for everybody, and best for himself. Two spoonsful of sauce blanche float his choice portion of the Albany beef. The liver of the turkey he accepts as carver’s perquisites. And when he comes to cut the saddle of venison, plenty of delicate little scraps, quite too small to offer to others, find their way to his plate.

Lucy is at his right. What? in high spirits? in gay colors? Has she so soon become a hypocrite and conspiratress? Why, the little dissembler laughs merrily, and flirts audaciously! Laughs merrily! Ah! there are bitter tears just beneath that laugh! If you call tolerating compliments from that young Captain at her right flirting, then she is flirting, and so conceals her disgust of her betrothed.

And who is that young Captain? He stole into the chair at Lucy’s right, and began to talk

sentiment before he had had his soup. Who is this fine gentleman of twenty-six, with the oval face, the regular features, the slightly supercilious mouth, the dimpled chin, the hair so carefully powdered and queued ? Who is this elegant *petit maître* ? With what studied gesture he airs his ruffles ! How fluently he rattles ! How easily he improvises jingle ! He quotes French, as if it were his mother-tongue. He smiles and sighs like an accomplished lady-killer. Who is he ?

Major Emerick, of the Hessian Chasseurs, looks across the table at this gay rattle, and then whispers to his own neighbor, Lord Rawdon, "Zee dat dab maggaroni, Chack Antré ; how he bake lubb to de breddy Lucie ! Bajor Gurr will bide off his 'ead breddy sood."

"Kerr may glower and look like a cannibal," Rawdon returned, in a whisper, "but he will not eat Jack André's head so long as there's any of that venison left."

"I dinkèd Chack was id Bedsylvadia or Cherzezy," says Emerick, wiping that enormous moustache of his,— a coarse Hessian article, planted like a bushy abattis before his mouth.

"He was," replied Rawdon, "and I don't see how he has been able to get here so soon, unless that is his *eidolon*, his wraith, and moves like the ghost in Hamlet. I suppose he heard that Kerr

was going to marry the heiress, and there would be an Adjutancy looking for an Adjutant, and has posted up to offer himself. He did n't know I was to have it. Jack is in too much hurry to be a great man. His vanity will get him into a scrape some of these days."

So this sentimental Captain is Jack André. A pretty face ; but there is gallows in it. A pretty laced cravat ; but the tie has slipped ominously round under the left ear. Ah ! Jack, Rawdon is right ; thy vanity will be the death of thee. Suppose thou hast been jilted by the pretty Mrs. R. L. Edgeworth, *née* Sneyd, do not be over hasty to gain name and fame, that she may be sorry she loved the respectable Richard, and not thee, flippant Jack. Sink thy shop-keeping days ; nobody remembers them against thee. Do not try by unsoldierly tricks of bribery and treachery, and a correspondence after the bagman model, to get for thyself the rank of Brigadier and the title Sir John. And, Jack, take warning that the latitude of Brothertoft Manor is unhealthy for thee in the autumn. Never come here again, or thy bootjack will draw thy boots and find death in them ! Swinging by the neck is a sorry exit for a *petit maître*, and it must be annoying to know that, in punishment for a single shabby act, one's fame is standing forever in the pillory in Westminster Abbey.

Captain André whispered soft nothings to Lucy. And though Kerr glowered truculently, she listened, much to the amusement of Emerick and Rawdon. Lucky, perhaps, for the daughter, that mamma, at the head of the table, did not detect this by-play! She might have scented revolt, and hastened the marriage. An hour would have brought the Tartar's chaplain; five minutes would have clothed him in his limp surplice, and in five more, Lucy, still quelled by the old tyranny, would have stammered, "love, honor, and obey," — and "die."

She was not always very attentive to her butterfly companion.

Sometimes she bent forward, and looked at her mother, sitting in all her glory between Army and Navy, and the daughter's cheeks burned with shame. She longed to fly away from all this splendor, somewhither where she could dwell innocently and weep away the infinite sorrow in her gentle heart. If she had not been too bewildered by her throng of battling hopes and fears within, by the clatter of the feast, and Jack André's *mischianza* of gossip and compliment, her notions of right and wrong, of crime and punishment, would have become sadly confused.

Questions did indeed drift across her mind, — "How can she sit there so proud and handsome? How can she be so calm and hard?

How can she bear the brunt of all these eyes, and lead the talk so vigorously? She wields and manages every one about her. They applaud her wit. They listen to her suggestions. She seems to comprehend these political matters better than any of them. Hear Sir Henry Clinton, 'Madam, if you were Queen of England, these rebel Colonies would soon be taught subjection.' It is half compliment of guest to hostess; but more than half truth. For she is an imperious, potent woman. And has evil in her soul given her this power and this knowledge? Must women sin to be strong? How can she sit there, knowing what she knows of herself, knowing what is known of her? She seems to triumph. Triumph! alas! why is she not away in silence and solitude, with a veil over her bad beauty, praying to God to forgive her for the harm she has done, and for the sin she is? Is such hypocrisy possible? Or am I deceived? May not she perhaps, perhaps, be worthy? May she not be wise and good? Is it not I who am the hypocrite? May she not mean kindly in providing me a man of rank and power as a protector in these rude times? Are not my suspicions the ignorance of a child,—my plots the wicked struggles of a rebellious heart against duty? O God, pity and guide me!"

Lucy felt tears starting to her eyes at these

new and cruel thoughts, and forced herself again to listen to Jack André's small-talk.

Jack was telling a clever story of a raid he and some brother officers had made from New York on the poultry-yards of Staten Island. An old lady with a broomstick had endeavored to defend the Clove Road against these turkey-snatchers, and he gave her drawl to the life. "Then," says Jack, "out came Captain Rambullet, with the rusty matchlock of Rambouillet his Huguenot ancestor, and interposed a smell of cornstalk whiskey between us and his hen-roost." This scene, too, Jack gave with twang and drawl to the life, amid roars of laughter, and cries of "Coot! coot!" from Major Emerick.

Lucy did not laugh. She had all at once discovered that her sympathies were with these rebels, nasal twang and all. "My father is one of them," she thought. "If I am to be saved from marrying this coarse glutton, it must be by a rebel. Putnam and his officers were not so showy as these men; but they seemed more in earnest."

I do not succeed in entertaining you, fair lady," says André, *sotto voce*. "Your thoughts are all for that happy fellow beside you,"— and he looked with a little sneer towards Kerr, who was applying to Bottle for the boon of wit.

A feeling of utter despair came over poor

Lucy, as she turned involuntarily, and also glanced at the animal. Then she drew away indignantly from the man who had put this little stab into her heart.

“Are there no gentlemen in the world?” she thought. “Do men dare to speak so and look so at other young ladies?”

“Loog ad de breddy Meess,” says Emerick, holding a wine-glass before his bushy abattis, as a cover. “Zhe is nod habbie wid Chack, nor wid Gurr!”

“A dozen fellows,” Rawdon rejoined, behind his glass, “of better blood than Jack, and better hearts than Kerr, would have cut in there long ago. The daughter is as sweet and pure as a lily. But who dares marry such a mother-in-law?”—and he shrugged his shoulders expressively toward the hostess.

Do we talk so at dinner-tables in 1860? eh, *nous autres*?

The hostess now rose, and beckoned her daughter.

“I leave you, gentlemen, to your toasts,” she said. “Major Kerr will be my representative.”

She moved to the door. Army and Navy, Albion and Hesse, all sprang to open for her. A murmur of admiration for her beauty and bearing applauded the exit. Lady Brothertoft seemed to be at her climax.

Kerr of course did not let the toasts lag.

“ The King, gentlemen ! ”

Cheers ! Drank *cyathis plenis*.

Sir Henry Clinton rises, gleaming star, red nose, and all, and proposes, “ Our hostess ! ” Bumpers and uproar !

Then they load and fire, fast and furious. Bottle can hardly gallop fast enough to supply ammunition.

“ The Army ! ” “ Hooray, hooray ! Speech from Lord Rawdon ! ”

“ The Navy ! ” “ Three cheers for Commodore Hotham ! ”

“ The captured forts ! ” Drank in silence to the memory of Colonel Campbell and Count Grabowski, killed there.

“ Luck to Jack Burgoyne ! ” “ Pouting Jack,” André suggests. “ May he be a spiler to Schuyler, and fling Gates over the hedge into the ditch ! ” Laughter and cheers, and immense rattling of glasses on the table.

“ Here’s to General Vaughan and his trip up the river to-morrow ! May he add a moral to the Esopus fables ! ”

“ The Brandywine ! and here’s hoping Mr. Washington may have another taste of the same cup ! ”

Are modern toasts and dinner-table wit of this same calibre ?

Kerr rose and endeavored to offer the famous sentiment known as The Four Rules of Arithmetic. He was muddled by this time, and the toast got itself transposed. He gravely proposed, in a thick voice, and in words with no syllables,—“Addition to the Whigs! Subtraction to the Tories! Multiplication to the King’s foes! Division to his friends!” And added Kerr, out of his own head,—“Cuffush’n t’ ev’ryborry!”

Ironical cheers from Jack André. Whereupon good-natured Emerick, to cover the general serio-comic dismay, rose and said,—“Shettlemen, I kiv Bajor Gurr and his breddy bride.” Double bumpers. Hoorayryrayryray! Rattle everybody, with glasses, forks, and nut-crackers. One enthusiast flung his glass over his head, and then blundered out a call for Captain André’s song, “The Lover’s Lament.” Lord Rawdon was the only one to perceive the bad omen.

So Jack, without more solicitation, began, in a pretty voice,—

“Return, enraptured hours,
When Delia’s heart was mine,”—

and so on through a dozen stanzas of Strephonics,—a most moving ditty, the words and music his own.

Everybody felt a little maudlin when this Jack of all airs and graces closed his lay with a dulcet

quaver. There was a momentary pause in the revel.

In such pauses young gentlemen who love flirtation more than potion dodge off and join the ladies.

Let us follow this good example. A revel, with Major Kerr for its master, may easily grow to an orgie; and meanwhile the mother and daughter are sitting in the parlor alone.

IV.

THE sun of October had gone down below the golden forests on the golden hills. It was dusk, and the two ladies sat in the parlor, dimly lit by a glimmering fire.

They were alone; unless the spirit of the first Edwin Brothertoft was looking at them from Vandyck's portrait on the wall.

That wonderful picture hung in its old place. More than a century, now, it had been silently watching the fortunes of the family.

No Provincial daubs had ventured within sight of this masterpiece. Each successive Brothertoft was always proud to know that his face, at its best, was his ancestor's repeated. Each descendant said, "Vandyck painted us, once for all, in the person of our forefather. When there is another Colonel Brothertoft, or a second Vandyck, it will be time to give the picture a companion."

So one perfect work had vetoed a whole gallery of wooden visages.

The present Mrs. Brothertoft had always dis-

liked the picture. She had used it as a pretext for first summoning her husband to her side. When she brought shame into the house, she began to dread its tacit reproach. The eyes of the Colonel, sad and stern, seemed forever to follow her. His wife's gentle face grew merciless. Even the innocent child on the canvas read her secret heart.

By and by, to escape this inspection, she had the portrait covered with a crimson silk curtain.

"A Vandyck," she said, "is too rare and too precious to be given up to flies."

For many years the ancestors had been left to blush behind a screen of crimson silk.

To-day, before dinner, her guests had asked to see this famous work of the famous master.

No one could detect the tremor in her heart at this request. No one could see how white her face grew as she fumbled with the cords, nor how suddenly scarlet as she drew aside the curtain.

Every one exclaimed in genuine or conventional admiration.

The picture represented that meeting at Old Brothertoft Manor, after the battle of Horn-castle, in the time of the Great Rebellion. The Colonel was in his corslet, buff and jackboots of a trooper. His plumed hat, caught by a cord, had fallen upon his shoulder. He wore his hair

long, and parted in the middle, like a Cavalier, not like a crop-eared Roundhead. On one arm rested the bridle of the grand white charger beside him. With the other he held his fair boy, now pacified from his Astyanax fright, and smiling at his father's nodding crest and glinting breast-plate. The wife, the first Lucy Brothertoft, stood by, regarding the two she loved best with tender solicitude. It was, indeed, a sweet domestic group, and the gentleman's armor, his impatient war-horse, and that hint in the background of the Manor-House, smoking and in ruins, gave it a dramatic element of doubt and danger,—a picture full of grace, heroism, and affection,—one to dignify a house, to ennoble and refine a household.

Lucy looked at her mother as the curtain parted and revealed the three figures. To the guests they were Art; to the ladies they were mute personages in a tragedy. Lucy saw her mother's glance, quick and covert, at these faces she had so long evaded. The daughter could understand now why, as Mrs. Brothertoft looked, her countenance seemed resolutely to harden, and grow more beautifully Gorgon than ever.

“Quite a *chef-d’œuvre*!” says Sir Henry Clinton, looking through his hand, with a knowing air.—“What color! what chiar’ oscuro! what drapery!” Jack André exclaimed.—“No

one has ever painted high-bred people as Van-dyck," said Lord Rawdon.—" Breddy bicksher!" was Major Emerick's verdict.—" You must be proud, Madam," said honest Commodore Hot-ham, ignorant of scandal, " to bear this honored and historic name."

While these murmurs of approval were going on, Plato announced dinner. The guests filed out, leaving the picture uncovered. It still remained so, now that the mother and daughter sat in the dusky room, after dinner. The flashing and fading fire gave its figures movement and unreal life.

Lucy glanced at her mother's face, now dim and far away, and now, as the fire blazed up, leaping forth from its lair of darkness.

" Certainly," she thought, " my mother was never so terribly handsome."

It was true. She was an imperial woman, face, form, and bearing. How majestic her strong, straight nose, her full chin, her vigorous color, her daring eyes, her brow of command, and her black hair dressed, after a mode of the day, in a tower, and falling in masses on the neck! More flesh and more color would have made her coarse. Is it possible that the excitement of a bad conscience has refined her beauty? Must the coarse take the poison of sin, as the fine take the medicine of sorrow, to kill the

carnal element in their natures? Is it needful for some to wear, through life, a harsh dishonor next the skin?

“How can this be?” thought Lucy. “Should not the heart have peace, that the face may wear beauty, the emblem of peace? Can there be peace in her heart?”

Peace! As if in answer, at a flash of firelight, the mother’s face glared out fierce and cruel. Sternness, but no peace there!

Lucy turned, and took refuge with the personages of the picture.

“You,” she addressed them in mute appeal, “are a world nearer my heart than this unmotherly woman beside me. O chivalric gentleman! O benign lady! encourage and sustain me! My heart will break with these doubts and plots and perils.”

The two ladies sat silent by the firelight. The guests were noisy, two doors off. They were laughing and applauding Kerr’s tipsy toasts, André’s song, Emerick’s Hessian butchery of the King’s English.

At a louder burst of revelry Lucy started, shrank, and glanced at her mother’s impassive face,—a loyal mask to its mistress.

Mrs. Brothertoft also looked up, and caught Lucy’s eye. For an instant the two gazed at one another. There was an instant’s spiritual

struggle,— the fine nature against the coarse, the tainted being against the pure. Their two souls stood at their eyes, and battled for a breath, while the fire flashed like a waving of torches.

The flash sunk, the room was dark again. But before the light was gone the guilty eyes wavered, the guilty spirit cowered. Mrs. Brothertoft looked away, seeking refuge from her daughter, against whose innocent heart she was devising an infamy.

As she turned, she caught sight of the picture. It was steadily regarding her,— a judge, remote, unsympathetic, Rhadamanthine.

At this sight, the perpetual inner battle in her evil heart stormed to the surface. Her countenance was no longer an impassive mask.

Lucy suddenly saw a bedlam look leap out upon those beautiful features.

It seemed to Mrs. Brothertoft that the Furies, whose companionship and hints she had so long encouraged, now closed in upon her, and became body of her body, soul of her soul.

She rose, and strode up to the uncovered portrait.

She stood a moment, surveying it in silence,— herself a picture in the fire-lit obscure.

How beautiful her white shoulders, her white bosom above the dark silk, cut low and square in front, after a fashion of the time! How won-

drouslly modelled her perfect arms! The diamond at her throat trembled like the unwinking eye of a serpent.

She raised her white right arm, and pointed at the figure of the Parliamentary Colonel.

By the firelight, it seemed as if he, thus summoned, still holding his eager white horse by the bridle, stepped out before the canvas, ready for this colloquy.

Lucy was terrified by her mother's wild expression and gesture. The gentleman in the portrait had taken more than ever the semblance of her father's very self. But he wore a sterner look than she remembered on that desolate face.

The daughter shuddered at this strange meeting of her parents,—one in the flesh, one in the spirit.

“Sir!” said Mrs. Brothertoft, still pointing at the picture. There was scorn, veiling dread, in her voice.

Lucy could not control herself. She burst into tears.

At the sound of her first sob, the mother came to herself. Bedlam tore itself out of her face with a spasm. She let fall her round, white arm. A tremor and a chill shook her. With these, the Furies seemed to glide forth from her being. They stood for an instant, dim and rustling forms in the glimmer. Then they van-

ished to their place of call. Mrs. Brothertoft dashed the curtain over the picture and moved away.

She did not perceive — for she looked thither no more — that by her violent movement she had broken the cord, and let down one fall of the curtain, at the top, so that there was space for the heads of the soldier and his white horse to appear.

There those heads wait, as if at a window. There they seem, horse and man, to watch for their moment to spring into that dusky room, lit by the flashes of a dying fire.

Mrs. Brothertoft turned, and laid her hand on her sobbing daughter's shoulder.

"You seem agitated and hysterical, my dear," she said, almost gently. "Perhaps you had better hide your tears in your pillow. We shall not see our noisy friends for some time."

Again their eyes met for an instant. But the mother mistook Lucy's pleading expression. She had lost her power of deciphering an innocent face. She fancied she read contempt and triumph, where there was only pity and love longing to revive. She turned away, and, yielding to a brutal emotion, resumed, — "Yes, go, Lucy, and keep out of sight for the evening! We must not have red eyes and swollen cheeks when Adonis comes from dinner with pretty speeches for his fair bride."

Lucy rose, disappointed and indignant, and left the parlor without "Good night."

Given two weeks instead of two days before marriage, and this gentle spirit might emancipate itself. But obedience is still a piety with Lucy. Mute mental protests against injustice do not train the will. It must win strength by struggles. Her will has sunk into chronic inertia. She suffers now for her weakness, as if it were a crime.

She fled by the noisy dining-room and up to her chamber in the tower at the northwest corner of the house. In the mild, clear, star-lit night she could see yellow autumn among the woods around the mansion. Beyond, the white river belted the world. The lights of the British frigates sparkled like jewels in this silver cincture. Dunderberg, large and vague, hid the spaces westward, where night was overflowing twilight. Northward, the Highlands closed the view, dim as Lucy's hope.

Ah! why was there no clairvoyante Sister Anne to cry that she saw "somebody coming,"—to tell the desolate girl, staring from her window into the unfriendly night, that succor was afoot, and hastening in three detachments southward, as fast as the boulder, the bog, and the forest would permit.

But there was no Sister Anne, no friend

within or without the house. And so, closed doors! Weep, sob, pray, poor child. Suffer, suffer, young heart! Suffer and be strong!

Closed doors at last, and quiet at the Manor. Songs silent. Revelry over. The guests have gone, walking as men walk after too many bumpers. Sentinels here and there have received the inarticulate countersign. The boats' crews, chilly and sulky with long waiting, have pulled the "lobsters" off to the frigates, and boosted them up the sides. They have tumbled into their berths in ward-room or cabin,—one, alas! with his Hessians on! They must quickly sleep off wassail, and be ready to stir with dawn, for at sunrise General Vaughan starts with his flotilla up the river. And most of the diners-out, whether their morning headaches like it or not, must go with the General to commit arson upon Esopus, alias Kingston, a most pestilent nest of rebels.

Quiet then aboard the *Tartar*, the *Preston*, and the *Mercury*, swinging to their anchors in the calm river! Quiet at the *Manor-House*! but not peaceful repose,—for in their dreams the spirits of the mother and the daughter battle, and both are worn and weary with that miserable war.

V.

THERE were three headaches next morning at the breakfast-table at Brothertoft Manor.

Major Kerr carried an enormous ache in his thick skull. His was the crapulous headache. He knew it well. Every manner of cure, except prevention, he had experimented upon. The soda-water-cure did not reach his malady. The water-cure, whether applied in the form of pump or a wet turban, was equally futile.

“It could n’t have been t’ other bottle that has made me feel so queer,” Kerr soliloquized. “Must have been Jack André’s mawkish songs. I never could stand poetry.”

So he marched down to breakfast, more Rubens in complexion than ever, and twice as surly.

Spending tears had given Lucy *her* headache. She had wept enough to fill a brace of lacrymatories. The pangs sharpened when she saw Adonis appear, very red and very gruff. He seemed fairly loathsome to her now.

“Must such a beast—yes, I will say beast—as that come near me ?” thought she.

Strong language for a young lady; but appropriate. It is well to have a few ugly epithets in one's vocabulary. Hard words have their virtue and their place, as well as soft ones.

Mrs. Brothertoft also had a headache.

She looked pale and ill this morning. This will never do, Madam. Consider your beauty! It will consume away, if you allow so much fever in your brain.

Breakfast was more silent even than yesterday's. No headache cared to ask sympathy of either of the others.

Lucy said not a word. She compelled herself to be at table. She dreaded her mother's presence; but she dreaded her absence still more. Lucy suffered under the uneasiness of a young plotter. She knew that her plot was visible in her face. She trembled at every look. And yet she felt safer while she was facing her foes. Poor child! if she could have wept, as she wished, freely and alone, a dozen of lacrymatories—magnums—would not have held her tears.

Moody Mrs. Brothertoft is also silent.

She does not think it good policy to draw out her son-in-law this morning. Only a wretchedly low card, and no trump, will respond to the attempt. T' other bottle rather drowns the power of repartee. Major Kerr was too inarticulate

last night to be very coherent this morning. A courtly bow and a fine manner are hardly to be expected at *levée* from a hero lugged to his *couchée* by Plato and two clodhoppers,—themselves a little out of line and step with too many heel-taps. The hostess does not choose by solicitous questions to get growls from the future bridegroom, such as,—

Kerr *loquitur*. “Yes, thank you; my tea is mere milksop; my egg an addle; my toast a chip; my butter lard; my buckwheat cakes dem’d flabby. Everything has a tipsy taste and smells of corked Madeira. O, my head!”

Such talk would not make the lover more captivating. He had better be left to himself, to take his breakfast with what stomach he may.

Nor does Mrs. Brothertoft think it wise to remark upon yesterday’s dinner and its distinguished guests to her daughter. Remark brings rejoinder. This morning, again, Lucy had no kiss for her mother. Instead of the warm, tender caress of other days, with warmth and tenderness for two, Lucy’s manner was grave and distant.

Mrs. Brothertoft divines incipient rebellion in her daughter. She does not wish to let it cultivate itself with contradictions. If she should propound, “It is a fine morning,” Lucy might

say, "It seems to me cold as Greenland." If she suggested, "My dear, have the horses saddled, and take Major Kerr to see the view from Cedar Ridge," Lucy would probably respond, "Major Kerr is not fond of nature, and I am afraid of marauders." If she remarked, "What a grand, soldierly creature Major Emerick is! What an amusing accent! and his moustache how terribly charming!" Lucy might curl her pretty lip, and reply, "Grand! soldierly! the hirsute ogre! As to his accent,—I do not understand Hessian; and it does not amuse me to hear good pronounced 'coot,' and to have pictures, flowers, soup, and the North River, all classed together and complimented as 'bready.' And as to his moustache,—no moustache is tolerable; and if any, certainly not that great black thing." Nor would it do for the mother to say, "I am sure you found Captain André an Admirable Crichton," and to hear from her daughter in reply, "Don't speak of him! I am still sick with his sentimentality of a Strephon. He is a flippant coxcomb. I do not wonder Miss Honora Sneyd got tired of him, with his little smile and his little sneer."

Such responses Lucy would probably have made to her mother's attempts at breakfast-table talk. Do these answers seem inconsistent with the great sorrow and the great terror in the girl's

heart? Our passions, like our persons, are not always *en grande tenue*. It is a sign that the heart is not quite broken, when its owner has life enough to be pettish. The popgun is the father of the great gun. Silly skirmish and bandying of defiance precede the great battle for life and death.

So Mrs. Brothertoft knew, and she was not willing to give Lucy the chance to hear herself say, 'No.' If she were once publicly compromised as of the negative faction, she might, even at this late hour, foster her little germ of independence. She might wake up to-morrow with a Will of Her Own, grown in a single night as big as Jack's bean-stalk. She might expand her solitary, forlorn hope of a first No into a conquering army. No, No,—only a letter and a cipher,—she might add ciphers, multiply it by successive tens and make it No,000,000,000,—and so on, until she was impregnable to the appointed spouse.

This of course must not be.

The mother did not know that Lucy had hoisted a signal of distress, and that she was almost ready to haul her flag up from half-mast, and fly it at the masthead of defiance. This Mrs. Brothertoft did not suspect of her submissive and meek child. She knew nothing of Voltaire's errand. But she had grown suddenly apprehensive and

timorous, and hardly recognized her old intrepid self this morning. She began to quail a little more and more before her daughter's innocence. For all reasons, she did not desire to provoke discussion.

A grim, mute breakfast, therefore, at Brothertoft Manor.

Each headache looked into its tea-cup in silence. Major Kerr crunched a bit of dry toast, instead of feeding omnivorously.

There is no conversation of this party to report, gay or glum.

But tableau is sometimes more dramatic than talk.

A new-comer at the door glanced at this unsociable trio, and deciphered the picture pretty accurately.

It was old Voltaire, limping forward from the kitchen.

Lucy sat with her face toward the pantry door, and first saw him.

Flash! Lucy lightened and almost showered tears at the rising of this black cloud, charged with fresh electricity.

Flash back! from the whites of Voltaire's eyes and from his teeth.

It was a brief flash, but abiding enough to show Lucy, through her gloom, one figure stealing to her succor. Him she was sure of,

— her father. But one gleam from the whites of a black could not reveal the other recruits to her rebel army. So they must remain latent, with their names and faces latent, until she can have an interview with her compplotter.

But what a hot agony of hope blazed up within her at Voltaire's look and cunning nod!

“I must not scream with joy,” she thought. “I must not shriek out this great, wicked, triumphant laugh I feel stirring in me. I must not jump up and hug the dear old soul. Thank Heaven, my tea is hot, and I can choke myself and cry.”

Which she proceeded to do; and under cover of her napkin got her face into mask condition again.

She was taking lessons — this fair novice — in what a woman's face is made for; — namely, to look cool when the heart is fiery; to look dull, when the wits have just suffered the whetstone; to look blank, when the soul's hieroglyphs will stare out if a blush is only turned on; to look tame, when the spirit is tiger; to look peace, when there is no peace; to look mild as new milk, when the blood boils and explosion butts against the wired cork of self-control. A guileful world, guileless lady! and you must fight your fight to-day with silence and secrecy, lest mamma detect a flutter in your bosom, and your

fledgling purpose of flight get its pin-feathers pulled, if not its neck wrung.

Voltaire limped forward with a plate of buckwheat cakes. They were meal of the crop which had whitened the slopes of Westchester this summer, and purpled them this autumn. They were round as a doubloon, or the moon at its fullest. Their edges were sharp, and not ragged and taggy. Their complexion was most delicate mulatto. Their texture was bubbly as the wake of a steamboat. Eyes never lighted on higher art than the top cake, and even the one next the plate utterly refused to be soggy. Indeed, each pancake was a poem,—a madrigal of Sappho's most simply delicate confectioning, round as a sonnet, and subtle in flavor as an epigram.

These pearls Voltaire cast before the party. Nobody partook. Nobody appreciated. Nobody noticed. The three appetites of the three headaches were too dead to stir.

The old fellow was retiring, when Mrs. Brothertoft addressed him roughly.

“I shall promote Plato and break you, Voltaire, if you are taken sick at the wrong time again.”

“Sorry, missus. Colored mabbas, missus. No stoppin' him. Bery bad indeed!”

His appearance disarmed suspicion. He was

a weary and dismal object after his journey. No one, to look at him, would have divined that his pangs were of the motive powers, and not the digestive,—that he suffered with the nicked shin, the stubbed toe, and the strained calf, and was utterly unconscious of a stomach, except as a locality for colonizing a white lie in.

VI.

WHEN Pyramus and Thisbe, when Cœur de Lion and Blondel, want speech of each other, Wall will ever have “a cranny right and sinister” for their whispers, will “show a chink to blink through with their eyne.”

Breakfast was over. Voltaire was in the pantry, clashing dish and pan for a signal. Lucy waited her moment to dart in and get her hopes of escape made into certainties.

“I am going up stairs, Lucy,” said her mother, “to give Dewitt her last hints about your wedding-dress. Come up presently and try it on.”

She went out, leaving lover and lady together.

Kerr stood before the fire in his favorite posture. His face was red, his jacket was red. He produced the effect of a great unmeaning daub of scarlet in a *genre*—*mauvais genre*—picture.

The big booby grew embarrassed with himself. The quiet presence of this young girl abashed him. He knew that his suit was an insult to her. He saw that she did not appreciate his feet and inches. Neither his cheeks nor his shoulders

nor his calves touched her heart. His vanity had been hurt, and he felt a spiteful triumph that she was in his power.

This morning he was ashamed of himself. It is a grievous thing that men cannot go to bed tipsy and wake up without headaches and with self-respect. Perhaps it will be different when Chaos comes again.

Kerr felt disgusted with himself, and embarrassed. He wanted to talk to cover his awkwardness. He did not know what to say. The complaint is not uncommon.

“I suppose she knows it’s a fine day, and wont thank me for telling her,” he thought. “Vaughan’s trip up the river,—that’s talked out. I made the pun about Esopus and Esop’s fables, that Rawdon got off last night, and she did n’t laugh. I wish I had Jack André’s tongue. I have half a mind to cut it out of him—the dashed whipper-snapper—for trying to get her to flirt with him yesterday. I suppose I ought to be making love now. But she has never let me come near enough to make what I call love. Well, I must say something. Here goes! Ahem! Lucy—Miss Lucy.”

“Sir.”

“It’s a very fine day.”

“Very.”

“A most uncommonly fine day for this doosed climate.”

No reply.

“I’d box the dumb thing’s ears if she was Mrs. K.,” thought the Major. “But she sha’n’t silence me. I’ll give her another chance. Ahem! Miss Lucy! Would n’t you like to stroll out and take the air?”

“No, I thank you. Do not let me detain you.”

“I say, you know, we’re to be married to-morrow. You need n’t be so infernally distant.”

“My mother wishes me to join her with the dressmakers.”

“Well, if you wont come, you wont,” says Kerr, taking himself off in dudgeon.

He walked out upon the lawn. The air was nine-oxygen azote of the purest proof. He swallowed it boozily, as if it were six-water grog.

Lucy hied to the trysting-place, where the arch-plotter was waiting amid pans and dishes.

“O Voltaire, tell me!” she cried. And here tears interrupted her, and gushed as if she intended to use the biggest pan for a lacrymatory.

“Don’t cry, Miss Lucy,” the old fellow says. “It’s good news!”

At which she only wept the more.

Without much knowledge of the chemistry of tears, Voltaire saw that spending them relieved and calmed the young lady. Meanwhile, to be talking on indifferent subjects until her first burst was over, he said, “I saw Major Scrammel

at Fishkill, Miss Lucy. He asked after your health."

"I am obliged to him." The name seemed to act like a dash of cold water. These Majors fatigued her. Scrammel Yankee, Emerick Hessian, Kerr British,—she liked none of them. She began to feel a disgust for the grade.

"My father!" she said, with her whole heart in the word, "tell me of him. He has not forgotten me. He loves me. He will save me from this—this—" A sob drowned the epithet.

"He loves you dearly," Voltaire responded.

"Lub," he still pronounced the precious word. He brought his two thick lips together to sound the final "b," instead of lightly touching his upper teeth against his lower lip and breathing out "ve" final.

This great fact of love established, with all its sequel, by a single word, Lucy, womanlike, desired to know that this dear new lover no longer misunderstood her. She must be satisfied that she stood right in his esteem before she could take thought of her own dangers.

"You told him," she said, eagerly, "that I was not an unnatural daughter,—only deceived and deluded by this cruel woman?"

Tears had started again, as she thought of the misery he must have suffered for her disloyalty. But indignation at her mother burned them up, and she closed her sentence sternly.

“He sees through it all,” the old ambassador replied.

“How did he look? Not very sad, I hope?” she said.

Womanlike again, she must have the person before her eyes. She must see him, a visible being,—that she could take to her heart with infinite love and pity and hope,—before she could listen to his message of comfort to her.

“He looked pretty old, Miss Lucy. His hair’s grown gray. It ought n’t to. He’s a boy still,—only a little better than forty. He could make his life all over again yet. But he looked old and settled down sad. He’s got a sargeant’s coat on, instead of a general’s; but he looks, into his face, as if he know’d all generals know, and a heap more.”

“My dear father!” interjected Lucy in the middle of Voltaire’s description. And she thought what a beloved task it would be for her to renew and restore that ruined life.

“And now, Voltaire,” she said, “can he protect me?”

“We talked it all over. He did n’t see anything he could do. He said he was too broken-hearted to plan for anybody.”

Poor Lucy! all her hopes thus dashed down! She could almost hear her own heart break.

But Voltaire continued: “He had guv”—

(no Tombigbee, old boy!) — “given it all up, and I was goin’ off feelin’ mighty low, — mighty low, I tell *you*, Miss Lucy. I started off for the woods and sot down, lookin’ for a squer-ril-hole to git into, and die like a fourlegs. Jess then, jess before I ’d found my dyin’ bed, I heerd somebody screech, ‘Voltaire, Voltaire!’ like mad. Fust I thought ’t was the Holy Angels. Then I thought praps ’t was the Black Debbls, prowlin’. I looked round the woods, pretty skeered, and heerd chestnuts drap. Then come the yell again, and your father lighted right down on me and dragged me back like a go-cart. I did n’t know what was comin’; but he yanked me up the bank to the old well, afront of Squire Van Wyck’s farm-house, and there I saw — ”

At this point of his eager recital Voltaire’s ancient bellow had to pause and draw breath.

“Saw!” cried Lucy equally eager, peopling this pause with a great legion of upstart hopes, all in buff and blue, fine old Continentals complete from boots to queues; but strangers to her, and therefore without faces.

“Saw Major Skerrett,” gasped Voltaire.

All that legion of hopes in Lucy’s brain suddenly condensed into a single heroic Continental vision, with the name Skerrett for a face. She was sure this new-comer meant HELP. She

could feel her just now breaking heart tie itself together with a chain, each link a letter of the name Skerrett.

“Another Major!” she said, half impatiently.

There was almost a shade of coquetry in her little protest against this stranger personage. The woman was not dead in her yet.

“Anudder Major ob anudder stuff. De good God, not de Debbl,—he make dis one.”

“O Voltaire, don’t talk so!”

Did she object to his fact in physiology, or to his pronunciation?

Voltaire, with bellows rested, now began to describe the new hero with enthusiasm. His touches were crude, but picturesque,—a charcoal sketch.

“Major Skerrett, Miss Lucy. O my! what a beautiful moustache he had! jess the color of ripe chestnut-leaves, and curling down on each side, so.”

The black forefinger described an ogee on either black lip.

Lucy did not interrupt. She must have her correct image of the new actor before she inquired his *rôle*. She perceived already that he was not to be a sicklied Hamlet.

Her first picture of the hero had been a figure in a Continental uniform, with the name Skerrett instead of a face.

Second picture: Lucy sees the mere name vanish. Two chestnut-leaves, fine gold as October can paint them, broad in the middle, blunt at the but, taper toward the point, serrated along the edges, dispose themselves to her mind's eye in the air, and form a moustache. She looks at her vision of this isolated feature, and thinks, "It is much prettier than Major Emerrick's."

"A go-ahead nose," continues Voltaire, without pause.

Lucy inserts a go-ahead nose into the blank, over and a little ahead of the moustache. Third picture.

"No mumps round *his* cheeks and chin," the describer went on.

Not a mump had ever disfigured the cheeks Lucy hereupon balanced on either side of the nose and the chin which she had located under the two chestnut-leaves. Picture fourth.

"Eyes blue as that saucer,"—Voltaire pointed to a piece of delicate china,—"and they look like the Holy Angels."

Into their sockets Lucy inserted a pair of orbs, saucer in color not in shape, and gave them a holy, angelic expression. She inspected the growing portrait with her own sweet eyes,—they were hazel, "an excellent thing in woman,"—and began to think the illumined face very charming.

"Lots of tan on his bark," resumed the painter in words.

Lucy dipped her pencil in umber and gave the bark of cheeks, chin, and nose a nut-brown tint, that bravely backed the gold of the moustache.

"Yaller hair under his cocked hat."

"Yellow! if you please, Voltaire," she protested, and with skilful thought she adjusted the coiffure.

"No queue."

An imaginary queue, tied with a tumbled black ribbon, had been bobbing in the air near the hero's cerebellum. Lucy docked it, and, with a scornful gesture, sent it whirling off into the Unseen.

"Now," says Voltaire, "you jess stick in Troot (Truth), Wercher (Virtue), Kerridge (Courage), and all the other good things into that are face: you jess clap on a smile that 'll make a dough heart in a bosom turn into light gingerbread; and give him a look that can make stubbed toes want to wheel about and turn about and dance breakdowns, and is stickin' plaster to every scratch on an old free colored gentleman's shins: you jess think you see a Major what Liberty and all the Holy Angels is pullin' caps for, and all the Debbls is shakin' huf away from where he stands: you jess git all that

in your eye, Miss Lucy, and you 've got Major Skerrett."

The picture was complete. Truth, Virtue, Courage, and the sister qualities, Lucy had dimpled into the bronzed cheeks, as a sailor pricks an anchor, or Polly's name, into a brother tar's arm with India ink. She had given the hero's face a smile, yeasty, sugary, and pungent enough to convert the dullest dough heart into light gingerbread. She had bestowed upon her ideal a look that would be surgery to scarred shins and light fantasy to the weariest toes. Now she passed her finger over the chestnut-leaf moustache to smooth down its serrated edges. The portrait was done. Lucy surveyed it an instant, and blushed to think it was indeed a Major that women and angels might pull caps for.

She blushed to herself—the simple maid—and felt a slight shame at her longing to see if the real man was identical with her ideal.

This child—remember she was but eighteen, and had been kept by herself and her mother, a complete child until just now—this child had hitherto had no ideal of a hero except that he must be Kerr's opposite. We know already her verdict upon the British officers. Of Putnam's family, Scrammel she distrusts; Radière she would like as a friend, if he were not so Gallic, dyspeptic, and testy; Humphreys is ridiculous,

with his grand airs and his prosy poetasm ; Livingston amuses her ; — *voila tout !*

“ And can this gentleman help ? ” she asked earnestly, as soon as she had his person before her eyes.

“ Help ! ” says Voltaire ; “ he can’t help helping. That’s his business under this canopy.”

The negro stated briefly the scheme for Kerr’s capture and her abduction.

Lucy comprehended the whole in a moment.

“ Major Skerrett sent you a message, Miss Lucy,” says the successful envoy, closing his report.

“ Me ! ” she said. She massacred a little scruple, that Major Kerr’s betrothed ought not to be receiving messages from strange majors. “ What is it ? He is very kind to think of me.”

“ He said, ‘ Tell Miss Brothertoft to be brave, to be prudent, and to keep her room with a headache, until we are ready to start.’ ”

“ It makes me brave and prudent, now that I have a strong friend to trust. But the headache I had is all gone. I never felt so well and happy in my life.”

“ Look at *him* ! ” Voltaire rejoined, pointing to Kerr, through the pantry window. “ That will make you ache from your head to your heels.”

She did look, and ached at once with fresh resentment and disgust.

Kerr was leaning limp against a tree, breathing tipsily his nine-oxygen azote. The golden hills, the blue river, and the mountains, blue and gold, had no charms for him. He was thinking, "Almost time to make it seven bells. I can't touch anything stronger than six-water grog this morning. O my head!"

"Pretty fellow fur a lubber to my young lady!" says Voltaire. His mispronunciation revealed a truth.

This faithful blackamoor now proceeded to act Othello relating his adventures. He had a tragic-comic episode to impart of his "hair-breadth 'scapes," "of being taken by the insolent foe," of all "his portance in his travel's history"; and what he suffered, shin and sole, in the "rough quarries, rocks, and hills" back of Anthony's Nose, while he dodged by night along the by-paths.

Lucy "gave him for his pains a world of sighs," and "loved him for the dangers he had passed" in her service.

"Now," said the loyal squire, in conclusion, "I must set you something to do, Miss Lucy."

"What?" she asked, trembling a little at responsibility.

"Send Dewitt and Sally Bilsby off home! They'll want a frolic after working so hard on your wedding-dress. We must have the house to ourselves to-night."

"To-night! Lucy's heart bounded and sunk. Yes, she must be free to-night, or to-morrow would make her a slave.

"Miss Lucy," whispered Voltaire, "two of 'em was here already before sunrise."

"Not the ____" She hesitated.

"Not the Major! No; old Sam Galsworthy and Hendrecus Canady. You know 'em. They come to see how the land lay."

"Mother calls; I must go," said Lucy, in a tremor.

She gave one look through the window at Kerr, leaning limp against a chestnut-tree. The Skerrett-moustache-colored leaves in myriad pairs shook over him. She seemed to see a myriad of faces, with go-ahead noses, no mumps, angelic blue eyes, bronzed skins, and truth and courage in every line, looking out of the tree, and signalizing her, "Be brave! be prudent!"

VII.

PORTEOUS all the morning was Voltaire to Sappho.

Now cookery, like chemistry, must have peace to perform its experiments in.

Poor Sappho, with her husband darting into the kitchen, looking mysterious, exploding "Hush!" and darting off again, was as much flustered as a nervous chemical professor when his pupils jeer his juggles with cabbage-liquor, and turn up rebellious noses at his olefiant gas.

Sappho's great experiment of dinner suffered. She put sugar in her soup and salt in her pudding. She sowed allspice for peppercorns, and *vice versa*. She overdid the meat that should have been underdone. She roasted her goose until its skin was plate armor. She baked her piecrust hard as Westchester shale. Yesterday's dinner was sublime; to-day's would be ridiculous. Conspiracy upsets domestic economy, as it does political.

When Voltaire had deranged his wife with dark hints, he proceeded to perplex his son.

Plato was lord of the stables. These were times of war. Westchester was beginning to suffer for being neutral ground for rebel and tory to plunder. Rents came slow at Brothertoft Manor, and when they came were short. Economy must be consulted. That crafty counsellor suggested that Plato's helpers in the stable should be discharged, and he do three men's work. He was allowed, however, Bilsby *juvenissimus* and another urchin from the Manor to "chore" for him. They were unpaid *attachés*. They did free service as stable-boys, for the honor and education of the thing, for the privilege of chewing straws among the horses, and for the luxury of a daily bellyful of pork and pudding, and a nightly bed in the loft.

Voltaire went out to the stable. The six white horses of famous Lincolnshire stock stood, three on this side, three on that. Their long tails occasionally switched to knock off the languid last flies of summer.

Voltaire stopped at the coach-house door to drive out a noisy regiment of chickens. A lumbering old coach, of the leathern convenience order, was shoved away in a corner. There is always such a vehicle in every old family stable,—a stranded ark, that no horse-power will ever stir again.

"Nineteen year ago," thought the ancient

Brothertoft retainer, "nineteen year ago last June, I drew Mister Edwin and that Billop gal, in that conveniency, less than two hundred yards from her house in Wall Street to Trinity Church, to be married. I heerd the Trinity bells say, 'Edwin Brothertoft, don't marry a Billop!' I felt it in my bones that she'd turn out mean. Her money brought worse luck than we'd ever had before. And the good luck has n't got holt yet."

"Plato," says he, stepping into the great picturesque stable, half full of sunshine, half of shade, and half of hay, fragrant as the Fourth of July.

"Sir!" says Plato, drawing himself up, and giving a military salute. He had seen much soldiering going on of late, and liked to play at it,—a relic, perhaps, of Gorilla imitativeness.

"Them boys don't look to me in good health."

Voltaire pointed to Bilsby and mate. They were both chewing straws,—a pair of dull sharps, like most young clodhoppers. They could tell a calf from a colt with supernatural keenness; but were of the class which gets itself well Peter-Funked before its manhood learns the time of day.

"Dey's fat, ragged, and sassy as ary boys dis chile ever seed," rejoined Plato.

"Bery weakly dey looks," continued the con-

spirator. "Fallin' away horrible! Neber see sich sickly boys 'n all my born days. Chestnuts is what dey wants. Worms is de trouble. Boys always gits worms unless dey eats suthin on to a bushel of chestnuts in de fall."

The two ragamuffins dropped their straws, turned pale, and began to feel snakes wake and crawl within them.

"Now, boys," says Voltaire impressively, "if you want ter perwent dem varmint, jess you put fur de woods an' fill yourselves plum full ob chestnuts."

"But chestnuts has worms, too," objected Bilsby.

"So much de better; dey'll eat yourn. Go 'long now. Stay hum to-night, and don't come roun' here fore to-morrow noon. Be keerfle now! Eat all to-day; and pick to-morrow to keep. You don't look to me like boys who is prepared to die."

The pair obeyed, and departed solemnly. Nothing but chestnuts could save them from the worm that never dieth. There were two very grave and earnest lads that day cracking burrs in the groves of Brothertoft Manor.

Plato stared in consternation as he saw his regiment disbanded.

Voltaire winked with both eyes, and chuckled enormously.

“Don’t you ask me no questions, Plato,” says he, “an’ you wont have no lies to complex yer mind. I meant to clare de kitchen, ole fokes, young fokes, an so I scared off dem boys, ho, ho! Now I’s gwine to gib you a conundrum, Plato.”

Plato let go Volante’s tail, which he was combing, and pricked up his ears.

“What does a young lady do when she don’t want to marry her fust husband?”

“Marries her second,” guessed Plato, cheerfully.

“Plato! I ’se ashamed of you. Dat would be bigamy.”

The crestfallen groom gave it up.

“You gib it up,” says the propounder. “Well; she says to her coachman,—it’s bery mysterious dat de coachman’s name is Plato. She says to him, Plato!”

“What?” interjected the other.

“Neber interrupt de speaker!” chided Voltaire. “She says, ‘Plato, you know my mare.’ Says he, ‘Your mare Volanty, Miss?’ Says she,—it’s mysterious, but Volanty *is* her name,—‘Now, Plato, you jess poot anudder oat in her manger, an groom her slick as a het griddle, and see de girts and de bridle is right.’ And says she, ‘Plato, don’t you complex yer mind wedder de answer to dat conundrum ain’t suthin’ about runnin’ away. But jess you wait till de sebben seal is opened.’”

Here the namesake of him of Ferney gave a wise binocular wink.

The other philosopher's namesake also eclipsed his whites with a binocular wink. He divined where his sire had been travelling in the past thirty-six hours. He had nodded through the watches of last night to let the senior in undiscovered. He knew of the interview with Old Sam Galsworthy and Hendrecus Canady, an hour before sunrise. He comprehended enough of the plot to enjoy it as a magnificent conundrum, which he could guess at all day, sure that the seven seals of mystery would be opened, by and by.

Voltaire limped back to the house and his pantry. His butler countenance fell, as he contemplated the empty bottles of yesterday's banquet. He could almost have wept them full, if he had known any chemistry to change salt tears to wine.

“How those redcoats drink!” he muttered. “Our cellar wont last many more such campaigns. I must get up some fresh wine for to-day, and a little brandy to deteriorate Major Kerr.”

Burns wrote poetry as he pleased, in Scotch, in English, or in a United-Kingdom brogue. Voltaire takes the same liberty, and talks now rank Tombigbee, now severe Continental, and

now a lingo of his own. Most men are equally inconsistent, and use one slang in the saloon and another in the *salon*.

Voltaire lighted a candle, and descended into the cellar.

"It 's resky," thought he, "to bring a light, without a lantern, among all this straw and rubbish. Fire would n't let go, if it once cotched here. But nobody ever comes except me."

A flaring dip, very free with sparks, was certainly dangerous in this den. Who has not seen such a tinder-box of a place under a careless old country-house? Capital but awesome regions they offer for juvenile hide and seek! How densely their black corners are populated with Bugaboo! The hider and the seeker shudder alike in those gloomy caverns, and are glad enough to find each other, touch hands and bolt for daylight.

Habit, or possibly his complexion in harmony with dusky hues, made Voltaire independent of the terrors of the place. He marched along, carefully sheltering his candle with a big paw, brown on the back and red on the palm.

Combustibles were faintly visible in the glimmer. There were empty wine-boxes overflowing with the straw that once swaddled their bottles. There was a barrel of curly shavings, a barrel of rags quite limp and out of curl, a

barrel of fine flour from the Phillipse Mills, a barrel of apples very fragrant, one of onions very odorous, a barrel of turnips white and shapely, and a bin of potatoes, of the earth, earthy, and amorphous as clods. There were the staves and hoops of a rotten old beer-cask, leaning together, and trying to hold each other up, like the decayed members of a dead faction. There was a ciderless cider-cask, beginning to gape at the seams, like a barge out of water. Rubbish had certainly called a congress in this cellar, and the entire rubbish interest in all its departments had sent deputies. Old furniture had a corner to itself, and it was melancholy to see there the bottomless chairs that people long dead had sat through, the posts of old bedsteads sleeping higgledy-piggledy, and old tables that had seen too many revels in their day, and were tipsily trying to tumble under themselves. Then there was a heap of old clothes and ole clo', ghostly in their forlornness, lifting up arms and holding forth skirts in vain signal for the ragman. It was a gloomy, musty, cavernous place, and Voltaire's faint candle only shed a little shady light around.

The butler unlocked the wine-room door. Batteries of dusty bottles in their casemates aimed at him, with flashes of yellow-seal at their muzzles.

"Three bottles for Major Kerr,—his last," he said. "One, very particular, for Major Skerrett when he comes. One of our French Gutter de Rosy brandy to qualify with. Ranks looks broken here since Major Kerr come. I must close 'em up to-morrow. Bottles likes to lie touchin', so the wine can ripen all alike."

The old fellow's hands were so full that he could not lock his door conveniently. He left it open for his next visit of reorganization.

He limped off, running the gauntlet of the combustibles. No spark flew, no cinder fell. That masterful plaything, fire, could not be allowed to sport with the old rubbish.

How Voltaire proceeded to carry on his private share of the plot by deteriorating Kerr's allowance of Madeira with Cognac, is a secret of the butler's pantry. It shall not be here revealed. Why deteriorate the morals of 1860 by recalling forgotten methods of cheating? Adulteration is a lost art, thank Bacchus! We drink only pure juices now. Only honest wines for our honest dollars in this honest age.

Now from the cellar we will mount to the room above stairs, where Penelope and her maids—no, not Penelope, for she was loyal and disconsolate—where Mrs. Brothertoft and her maids are at work at the *san-benito* for to-morrow's *auto-da-fé*.

VIII.

IF there was a Dieden in 1777, she has gone with the braves who lived before Agamemnon, and like them is forgotten.

If there had been a Dieden in little New York of those days, she would not have been called in to make Miss Brothertoft's *san-benito*, her wedding-dress.

The resources of the Manor were sufficient. Mrs. Brothertoft could plan the robe. Mrs. De-witt could execute it. Sally Bilsby also lent a 'prentice hand. The silk, white, stiff, and with a distinct bridal rustle, had been bought to order by Bilsby junior, on one of his traitorous trips to New York.

Lucy, leaving Voltaire in the pantry, as was described, ran up stairs and faced her wedding-dress without flinching. It is not generally a sight to blanch the cheeks of a young lady. Indeed, one may fancy that a rose finer than roses might bud in the heart, and bloom from neck to forehead, when a bride first beheld the lily-white drapery of her hour of immolation.

Lucy neither blanched nor blushed.

“ Be brave ! be prudent ! ” the warning of her unseen protector was ringing in her ears. She saw it, inscribed on a label, and hanging from the lips of her vision of his face. The brave do not blanch. The prudent do not blush. So she quietly joined the busy circle, took a needle and stabbed the wedding-dress without mercy.

It was a monstrous relief thus to kill time. She did herself, for the hour, “ her quietus make with a bare bodkin,” and the other weapons of a *modiste*.

“ Stitch, stitch, stitch ! Seam, and gusset, and band ! ”

“ Ah ! ” she thought, “ what a blessing is this distraction of labor ! I have shed my tears. If I were to sit inactive, I might brood myself into despair. If I were to think over my wrong, I might flame out too soon. If I look at my mother, I begin to dread her again. I know she could master me still. O my God ! sustain me through these last hours of my peril ! I never knew how great it was until now. I foresaw a misery ; but the degradation of giving myself up to this man, I never even dreamed of. I am ashamed, ashamed to recall that there have been instants when I tolerated him,—when I thought that he was not so very gross and coarse. I pray God that the sacredness of my soul is not spoilt.”

A great agony stirred in her maidenly bosom at this thought. She bent closer to her work. She knew that her mother's eyes were upon her. She heard, without marking, the tattle of the maids.

"Fly, little needle!" she said to herself. "Measure off this pause in my life! Every stitch is a second. Sixty are a minute. Minutes make hours, and hours wear out the weary day. Evening must come. If I can but be brave and prudent, I shall see my father and his noble friend, and be safe."

Her needle galloped at the excitement of the thought.

Mrs. Brothertoft looked at her, and said to her heart, with a sneer, — "Pretty creature! she consoles herself, it seems. Our boozy, rubicund bridegroom begins to look quite pale and interesting, seen through a bridal veil. The touch of white silk cures her scruples easily. Ah! the blushing bride will be resigned to her bliss. Bah! that I—I should dread such a pretty, silly trifler! What a fool I was to think her different from other simpering girls! So, this is the meaning of all her coy little wiles and her headaches. Headaches! she may have as many as she pleases now, in her pensive bower. Ah! I comprehend thee now, fair hypocrite. The slender fingers are impatient for the ring. Fly,

little bird, to the bosom of thy spouse. Perhaps he will not quite crush thy poor, silly heart. And I have been afraid of *her*! She is so tickled with her wedding favors, that she will presently be kissing me again for gratitude with more fervor than ever. But I am sick of her simplicity. I am tired of her 'Dearest mammas!' I should strangle her, I dare say, if she were not taken off. She grows more like that Edwin Brothertoft lately."

"Your dress is ready to try on, Miss Lucy," said Mrs. Jierck Dewitt.

So there was a mighty rustle, and a headless, armless torso of stiff white silk rose up and stood on its skirt. It did Dewitt great credit. Ah! if her character had only been equal to her skill! But she was a brazen hussy, and Sally, her sister, no better. *Tel maître, tel valet.* One positively bad woman spoils many negatively bad ones. It would not seem at all unfair if Destiny took advantage of the harm done Jierck Dewitt's wife in punishing the lady of the Manor through her means.

Lucy still faced her wedding-dress without flinching. She may even have thought that, if the worst came, it was better to go to the guillotine in becoming array. It is perhaps woman to say, "My heart is broken; but my bodice fits without a fold."

It is woman, no doubt, but there are women and Women. Lucy could safely admire the robe, and tranquilly criticise it, because she knew that she and it were not to see marriage together.

“Now shall I unlace you, Miss Lucy?” says the abigail.

Yes, abigail; as soon as these masculine eyes, whose business is with the young lady’s soul, not with her toilette, can take themselves decently out of the room.

IX.

NOMBRE de Dieden ! what a fit !

Unlacing and relacing concluded, these masculine eyes, again admitted to the maiden's bower, are dazzled with unexpected loveliness.

There stands the lady, within the perfect dress!!! beautiful to three points of admiration. Sweet eighteen can bear low neck by broad daylight.

The struggle in her heart with all her wild emotions of terror and hope was as great a beautifier as the presence of critical wedding-guests, the rustle of a surplice, the electric touch of a gay gold ring, and the first clasp of the hand of a husband.

And you, O Peter Skerrett ! you have shaved off your moustache and donned a coat much too small,—you have made a guy of yourself for your first interview with this angel !

Shall the personal impression she may already have made be here revised and corrected ? No ; for this is not real sunshine upon her. If she is ever photographed, it shall be in her bright, not

in her dark day. Let her wait till fuller maturity for description! It is easy to see the Brothertoft in her. She blends the tender grace of the lady in Vandyck's picture with the quiet dignity of the gentleman. But is there not kindling in her face the vigor of another race, her mother's? Perhaps a portrait now would belie her final look.

"You are like an angel, Miss Lucy," said Mrs. Dewitt.

She was. She stood there in bridal robe, veil, and wreath. Her hands were clasped firm to control her insurgent heart. Her lips were parted, and she was whispering to herself, "Be brave! Be prudent!" Her eyes overlooked the present, and saw hope in the blue sky above the golden Highlands through her window.

Yes; like an angel.

There was a hush for a moment. The three bad women — the pert hoyden, the false wife, and the proud mistress of the Manor — were silenced and abashed.

Again the old pang stirred in the mother's bosom. Again she longed to throw herself at her daughter's feet and pray forgiveness. But again she gained that defeat of a victory over her womanliness. She trampled down the weakness of repentance. The bedlam look flickered over her features, and she hardly restrained her furious

impulse to leap forward and rend the innocent face and the maiden bosom that so shamed her.

“ You *do* look *just* like an angel, Miss Lucy,” Abby Dewitt asseverated, with the air of a *connaisseuse* in the article. “ Don’t she, Sally ? ”

The two thereupon gave tongue to voluble flatteries.

“ Your work does you great credit, Dewitt,” Lucy said. “ Mamma, cannot we spare Abby and Sally to go home to the farm to-night ? They deserve a holiday after this long confinement. And to-morrow will be a busy day again.”

“ Of course, my dear, if they wish it.” Mrs. Brothertoft was glad to put her daughter under obligation.

The women again gave tongue with thanks. They were always, as Voltaire had said, ready to get away for a frolic. Lucy smiled to herself at the easy success of her stratagem. She had packed off baggage and baggage, without suspicion.

“ What a conspirator I am becoming ! ” she thought. “ Ah ! silly Lucy, the child, the thing to be flung away ! She too can help baffle the evil schemes against herself. When these coarse women are gone, there will be not a soul but friends within a mile of the house.”

Dinner was tardy to-day, after the late breakfast following the revel.

Nine-oxygen azote by the lung-full had given tone to Major Kerr's system. His appetite for meat and drink were in full force again, all the stouter for this morning's respite.

"What a lucky dog I am," he said, "to dodge that expedition of Vaughan's! I'm 'the soldier tired of war's alarms,' Miss Lucy."

"You do not care about laurels any more," Mrs. Brothertoft said, with her half-sneer.

"Not when I can get roses."

His look with this brought fire into Lucy's cheeks.

"No," resumed he; "I should be glad enough to help burn the dashed rebels' houses over their heads, and them, too, in their beds. Here's confusion to 'em, and luck to Jack Burgoyne! I hate the vulgar 'varmint.' But I don't want to leave a good dinner to see bonfires. I know where I'm well off, and going to be better. Eh, Miss Lucy?"

Her heart began to throb and her head to ache at once.

"This goose has got a bark on thick as an oak-tree," continued the valiant trencherman, making an incision. "Give me another cut of beef,—the red, with plenty of fat and plenty of gravy, if you please, my mamma that shall be. I need support when the parson opens his batteries to-morrow. Eh, Miss Lucy? 'With this

ring thee I wed, and with all my worldly —
Hain't got any goods. I 'll endow you with all
my worldly debts, and tell the Jews to shift
the security. Haw, haw!"

He laughed boisterously.

This coarse pæan stirred up echoes of repulsion in Lucy's heart.

How she longed to fling defiance at him! Patience,—she almost bit the word in two, with her teeth set hard upon it. One rash expression would be ruin; but great red-hot shot of scorn burned within her. She discovered that there was strong language in her vocabulary. It grew significant to her now. She was beginning to half understand herself at last. When the boiler grows hot, the water feels its latent steam.

"Am I the same being?" she thought. "Am I the meek Consent I have pitied and wept with so long? No, I have ceased to be a spiritless nobody. I am almost sorry that help from without is coming to me. I should like to stand up now and say, 'Madam, of you as a woman I will not speak,—as a mother, you are a tyrant, and I defy you. I defy you and this brute, not half so base as you, whom you have dared to name by the sacred name of lover, whom you have called in to aid you in dishonoring your child.' Yes; I could almost say that to her now. Is it pos-

sible? Is it possible that a woman can so hate a woman? I never felt what the sanctity of my womanhood was until now,—now that I perceive this miserable plot against it."

This defiant mood was strong within her. But presently, as she looked at Kerr, growing redder with too much dinner and too much wine, laughing at his own coarse jokes and throwing at her with great vulgar compliments; and when all at once, in contrast, rose the figure of the other Major as she had painted him,—disgust so mastered her that she sprang up, pleaded a headache, and fled to her chamber, to wait and hope and doubt and pray alone.

"Megrims again," said the lover, sulkily, as she disappeared. "I don't like it. She didn't run away from Jack André yesterday."

"O, let her amuse herself with headaches, if she pleases," said the Lady of the Manor. "I understand the child. I saw her this morning over her wedding-dress. She is as eager for the happy moment as any lover could wish."

"So you think she shams coy?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Brothertoft; and she was willing to believe it.

"Well, good night, pretty creature! Let it go up stairs and think how sweet it will look to-morrow in its silks and laces! What, are you going too, my mamma?"

“Yes. Take your glass of wine quietly. We will have supper late. I am going to doze a little in the parlor. I dreamed troublesome dreams last night.”

“By George!” said Kerr, as she closed the door. “Splendid woman! Twice as handsome as the Duchess of Gуроуе! I suppose she thinks the Kerrs will take her up when she goes to England. No, ma’am! We can’t quite stand that. You’ve got all you can expect out of me when you’ve married off your daughter on me. Now, then, it’s going to be solemn business, drinking alone.”

X.

PLOT and counterplot at Brothertoft Manor.
And meantime, what has counterplot without the
house been doing ?

If Edwin Brothertoft and Peter Skerrett could have travelled by daylight through the Highlands, then this narrative, marching with them, might have seen what fine things they saw, and told of them. But they went cautiously by night. They saw little but the stars overhead and the faint traces of their shy path. They were not distracted by grand views. Nature is a mere impertinence to men who are filled with a purpose. Fortunately, these intense purposes do not last a lifetime. Minds become disengaged, and then they go back, and make apologies to Nature for not admiring her. And she, minding her own business, cares as little for the compliment as for the slight.

It is a bit of the world worth seeing, that bossy belt of latitude between Fishkill and Brothertoft Manor. There is a very splendid pageant to behold there in the halcyon days of

October, the ruddy, the purple, the golden, when every tree is a flame, or a blush, or a dash of blood or deep winy crimson on the gray rocks of the mountains. The Hudson Highlands do not wrangle about height with the Alps; but they content themselves with wearing a more gorgeous autumn on their backs than any mountains on the globe. Go and see! Frost paints as bravely now as it did in 1777, and it is safer to travel. Bellona has decamped from the land, and half-way from Fishkill down the pass, Minerva, fair-haired, contralto-voiced, and courteous, keeps school and presides over the sixty-third milestone from New York. Go and see the Highlands for yourself! The business of these pages is mainly with what hearts suffer and become under pressure, little with what eyes survey.

Danger is safety to the prudent. Major Skerrett and his guide made their perilous journey without mishap. At the chilly dawn of day, we find them at the rendezvous in the hills behind Peekskill, trying to believe that there was warmth in the warm colors of the woods, and waiting for Jierck Dewitt.

Presently he appeared, in high spirits.

"We've come in the nick of time," said he. "The redcoats have done all the harm they could about here. They've drawed in every man, and

are off at sunrise up river for Kingston. They allow, if they set a few towns afire, that General Gates will turn his back to Burgoyne and take to passin' buckets."

"Bang!" here spoke the sunrise gun at Fort Montgomery.

"Bang! bang! bang!" the three frigates responded.

Dunderberg grumbled with loud echoes. He was pleased to be awaked by the song of birds; but the victorious noise of British cannon he protested against, like a good American.

"The coast is clear for us," resumed Jierck. "Clear almost as if these were peace times. Now if you'll come along, I'll take you to a safe den in the woods, a mile from the Manor-House, where you can stay all day, snug as a chipmunk in a chestnut stump, and see how the land lies. I'll tell you my other news as we go."

They took up their guns and knapsacks and followed. The light of morning was fair and tender. The autumn colors were exhilarating. White frost shone upon the slopes and glimmered upon every leaf in the groves.

These were the Manor lands. Each spot Edwin Brothertoft remembered as a scene of his childhood's discoveries of facts and mysteries in Nature. They walked on for an hour, and

Brothertoft grew almost gay with memories of his youth.

“ Do you see that white shining through the trees ? ” said Jierck, halting. “ It’s the river. Ten steps and you ’ll see the house. Now, Major, I ’ll go and look after my boys, and come at noon for your orders.”

Jierck turned back into the wood. Major Skerrett stepped forward eagerly. He had an eye for a landscape. He had also a soldier’s eye for every new bit of possible battle-field.

Ten steps brought him to the edge of the slope. A transcendent prospect suddenly flung out its colors before him. First was a stripe of undulating upland thoroughly Octobered. Then a stripe of river, bending like a belt in a flag, that a breeze is twisting between its fingers. Then beyond, Highlands, not so glowing as the foreground, nor so sparkling blue as the blue water, nor so simple as the sky, softly combined and repeated all the elements of beauty before him.

He turned to give and take sympathy from his companion. Mr. Brothertoft was not beside him. He had seated himself within cover of the wood.

“ Come out, sir ! ” called Skerrett with enthusiasm. “ I am so bewildered with this beautiful prospect that I need to hear another man’s superlatives to satisfy me I am not in a dream. Come out, sir ! We are quite safe.”

"My friend," said Brothertoft. "I was hesitating a moment before I risked the quenching of my strange good spirits. You are looking upon a scene that has been very dear and very sad to me. I cannot see it, as you do, with a stranger's eye. It is to me the scenery of tragedy. I cannot tell yet whether I have outgrown the wound enough to tolerate the place where I first felt it."

He moved forward, and took his place by the Major's side. The two stood silent a moment.

Thus far the younger, in his robust appetite for the beauty of Nature, had felt "no need of the remoter charm by thought supplied." Color and form he took as a hungry child takes meat and drink. Now for the first time there was history in his picture, sorrow upon his scene. He made his friend's sadness his own, and looked through this melancholy mist at the gold, the sheen, and the bloom. His mere physical elation at this intoxicating revelry of color passed away. Beauty left his head and went to his heart.

He turned to see how his companion was affected.

"I find," said Brothertoft, "that I do not hate these dear old scenes. Indeed, the flush and the fervor of this resplendent season enter into me. I am cheered enough to pardon myself all my faults, and all who have wronged me for their

wrongs. It is grand to feel so young and brave again."

For a moment there was bold light in his eyes and vigor in his bearing. The light faded presently and the vigor drooped. He was again the stricken man, aged prematurely by sorrow.

"But, my son," continued the elder, "I cannot quite sustain myself in this cheerful mood. I look at my forefathers' house, and think of my daughter, and I doubt."

Skerrett followed the direction of his eyes and studied the Manor-House.

It stood on a small plateau, half a mile from the river, in the midst of its broad principality. There was not such another house then in America. There are few enough now, town or country, cottage or palace, over whose doors may be seen the unmistakable cartouche of a gentleman.

The first Edwin Brothertoft built his house after the model of the dear old dilapidated seat in Lincolnshire. It was only one fourth the size; but it had kept the grand features of its prototype. Skerrett could see and admire the four quaint gables, two front and two rear, the sturdy stack of warm chimneys, and the corner tower with its peaked hat,—such as towers built in James the First's time wore. It bristled well in the landscape.

It was a century old. That must be a very unsociable kind of house which will not make itself at home in the space of a century. In a hundred years the Manor-House and buildings and their scenery had learnt perfect harmony with each other. Wherever trees were wanted for shade or show, they had had time to choose their post and grow stately. Those stalks which know nothing but to run up lank, for plank, had long been felled and uprooted. There were no awkward squads of bushes, stuck about where they could not stand at ease; but orderly little companies of shrubbery and evergreens had nestled wherever a shelter invited them, or wherever a shoulder of lawn wanted an epaulet. Creepers had chosen those panels of wall which needed sheltering from heat or cold, and had measured precisely how much peering into windows and drooping over doors could be permitted. The little Dutch bricks of the sides and the freestone of the quoins and trimmings, their coloring revised by the pencils of a hundred quartettes of seasons, now were as much in tone with the scene as the indigenous rocks of the soil. Absolute good taste had reigned at Brothertoft Manor for a century. Its results justified the government thoroughly. The present proprietress had been educated out of her gaudy fancies by this fine example of the success of a better

method. She had altered nothing, and made her repairs and additions chime with the ancient harmony.

At this moment, too, of Peter Skerrett's inspection, the landscape about the house wore its wealthiest garniture. Each maple in the grounds had crimsoned its ruddiest, or purpled its winiest, or gilded its leaves, every one with a film of burnished gold. The elms were all at their gayest yellow or their warmest brown, and stiff masculine chestnuts beside them rivalled their tints, if they could not their grace. Here and there was a great oak, resolute not to adopt these new-fangled splendors of gaudy day, and wearing still the well-kept coat of green which had served him all summer. Younger gentlemen of the same family, however, would not be behind the times, and stood about their ancestor in handsome new doublets of murrey color. Every slash and epaulet of shrubbery was gold on the green of the lawn, and creepers blazed on the walls and dropped their scarlet trailers, like flames, before the windows.

"It is a dear old dignified place," said Peter Skerrett, "and I wish I could go down and make a quiet call there by daylight. I will, by and by, after the war, unless the rebels punish it with fire for having dined Sir Henry Clinton."

"It is a dear old place," said Brothertoft, "and I love it most dearly as the school-house of my education in sorrow. No man is convinced of his own immortality until his soul has borne as murderous blows as can be struck, and still is not murdered. I come to the place where the hardest hitting at my peace has been done, and I feel a new sense of power because I find that there is something in me that is not quite devastated. On the old battle-field, I perceive that I am not wholly beaten, and can never be."

He said this in a tone of soliloquy. Peter Skerrett was too young to thoroughly understand his friend. Besides, he was conscious of a frantic hunger,—an excellent thing in a hero.

"Come, sir," said he, "shall we breakfast? I have remarked that swallowing dawn is an appetizer. Here goes at my knapsack, to see what General Putnam's cook has done for us."

The cook had done as well as a rebel larder allowed. They did well by the viands, and then, under cover of the wood, they wore away the morning watchfully.

They saw boats from the frigates land men to be drilled ashore or to forage in the village of Peekskill. Here and there a farmer, braver or stupider than his neighbors, was to be discerned, ploughing and sowing for next summer

as if war were a hundred miles away. Carts appeared creeping timidly along the country roads. The cattle seemed to feed cautiously and sniff about, lest Cowboys should catch them. The whole scene wore a depressed and apprehensive air. Brothertoft Manor was willing to be well with both sides, and was equally uncomfortable with both. The tenants of the Manor were generally trying to persuade themselves that British frigates in the river were merely marts for their eggs and chickens. Men that have not made up their minds are but skulking creatures on God's earth.

"Seems to me," said Skerrett, "that I can tell a Tory or a Neutral as far as I can see him."

The day wore on, and in this pause of action the two gentlemen opened their hearts to each other.

It was the intercourse of father and son. Each wanted what the other gave him.

The fatherless junior felt his mind grow deeper with a man who had touched bottom in thought. He was sobered and softened by the spectacle of one so faithful to the truth that was in him, so gentle, so indulgent, weakened perhaps by sorrow, but never soured.

The sonless senior said. "Ah, Skerrett! you are the young oak. If I had had you to lean upon,

I should not have lost force to climb and bloom.
Such a merry heart as yours makes the whole
world laugh,—not empty laughter, but hearty."

At noon Jierck Dewitt came to report. He and the boys were safely hid in his father's barn.

"Ike mostly sleeps," says Jierck, "Sam plays old sledge with dummy, and Hendrecus is writin' something in short lines all beginnin' with big letters, poetry perhaps. He's an awful great scholar."

Their plans were again discussed, and orders issued.

"Well," said Jierck, "at dusk I'll have my men, and father's runt pony for the prisoner to straddle, down at the forks of the road waitin' for you. Nothing can stop us now but one thing."

"And that?" asked the Major.

"Is Lady Brothertoft. If she suspitions anything before we're ready to run, it will be all up with us,—halter round our necks and all up among the acorns."

So Jierck, still "stiff as the Lord Chancellor," and yet limber as a snake in the grass, took his departure.

Afternoon hours went slower than the morning hours.

"The sun always seems to me to hold back

in going down hill," Skerrett said. "I wish he would tumble to bed faster. I am impatient to make our success sure."

"Your sturdy confidence reassures me," returned Brothertoft. "I am happy there is one of us whose heart-beats will not unsteady him. I lose hope when I think what failure means to my daughter."

"I must keep myself the cool outsider, with only a knight-errant's share in this adventure," Peter said.

A hard task he found this! The father so charmed him that he felt himself, for his sake, taking a very tender fraternal interest in the young lady. It was so easy to picture her in her chamber, not a mile away, looking tearfully for help toward the hills. It was so easy to fancy her face,—her father's, with the bloom of youth instead of the shades of sorrow; and her character,—her father's, with all this gentleness that perhaps weakened him, in her but sweet womanliness." Peter Skerrett perceived to the full the romance of the adventure. He frequently felt the undeveloped true lover in him grow restive. He thought that he was all the time putting down that turbulent personage. Perhaps he was. But it must be avowed that he often regretted his moustache, despised his ill-fitting coat, and only consoled himself by re-

calling, “ It will be night, and she will only half see me.” As evening approached, Peter Skerrett perceived that his desire to ~~redeem~~ this fair victim from among the bad and the base was become a passion. He also noticed that its fervor kept him cool and steady.

Silent sunset came. The crisis drew near. Doubts began to curdle in Edwin Brothertoft’s mind. He looked over the broad landscape, and along the solemn horizon, and all his own past spread before him, sad-colored and dreary.

“ Ah my beautiful childhood ! ” he thought. “ Ah my ardent youth, my aspiring manhood, my defeated prime ! My life utterly defeated, as the world measures defeat,— and all through her ! All through her, the woman I loved with my whole heart ! Please God we may not meet to-night ! Please Heaven we may never meet until her dark hour comes ! Please Heaven that when the loneliness of sin comes upon her, and the misery of a worse defeat than any I have felt is hers,— that then at last I may be ready with such words of pardon as she needs ! ”

“ See ! ” said Skerrett, softly. “ It is dark. There is a light in your daughter’s window. We will go to her.”

“ In the name of God ! ” said the father.

X I.

SCENE, the interior of Squire Dewitt's barn. Hay at the sides, hay at the back, and great mountains of hay rise into the dusky regions of the loft.

In the centre stands Jierck Dewitt, just returned from his noon interview with Major Skerrett.

At the left sits Ike Van Wart, asleep, with his mouth open. Perhaps, like Voltaire, he hears partially with his tonsils.

On the right, old Sam Galsworthy is killing time with old sledge for a weapon. His right hand has just beaten his left and won the stakes,— viz.: twelve oats.

Hendrecus Canady stealthily approaches the gaping sleeper on the left. He holds a head of timothy-grass,— in these times of war we perceive that it is a good model for a cannon sponge. Hendrecus introduces timothy's head into Van Wart's mouth, and begins to tickle the tonsils and palate, so rosy.

To these enters pretty Katy Dewitt, blushing

and smiling. Fragrance comes with her; and well it may, for she bears dinner,—a deep yellow dish of pork and beans and a pumpkin-pie exquisitely varnished.

Tender-hearted Jierck Dewitt at once remembered the wife who in happier days crisped his pork and sweetened his pie.

Hendrecus dropped his tickler into Van Wart, and sprang up to help his sweetheart. Her pretty smiles stirred happy smiles on his face,—a bright and good-humored one, though still of pill-fed complexion. His lover-like attentions brought out a blush on her cheeks. That fair color seemed to make the old barn glow and all the hay-mow bloom with fresh heads of pink clover.

Poor Jierck Dewitt recalled how there were once smiles as gay and blushes as tender between him and a damsel as buxom.

Poor fellow! his dinner did him no good. He grew moodier and moodier. The little scene between his sister and Hendrecus had made him miserable. He could not sleep like Van Wart, nor play cards with Galsworthy, nor skylark with Hendrecus. He sat brooding over his sorrow. His powers of self-control were weakened. He could not throw off this weight of an old bitterness. A great vague misery oppressed him. He began to fear his wits were going.

"If I could only get these ugly feelings into shape," he thought, "I could grapple with them and choke them down. I must do something, or I shall go mad. I believe I'll steal round through the woods to where I can see old Bilsby's house and the chestnut-tree where Abby first said she'd have me. Looking at the places may help me to drag this grief out of myself and put it on them."

Now that the British troops were withdrawn for Vaughan's expedition, Jierck felt quite secure in dodging about the woods of the Manor. He left his companions in the barn, and stole off toward his father-in-law's old red farm-house. He felt as if he were his own ghost, compelled to haunt a spot where he had been murdered.

It was quiet sunset. The golden light of evening was among the golden woods. The forest showered golden leaves upon the ground, and melted away in golden motes across the level sunbeams.

Jierck stole along until he came to a little glade, crossed by a pathway. A great chestnut-tree had made the glade its own. Lesser plants were easily thrust back by its stout overshadowing branches, and its brethren of the forest had willingly given place to see what their brother would do with its chance of greatness. It had done nobly. It was an example to trees and the

world, of the wisdom of standing by one's roots, expanding to one's sunshine, and letting one's self grow like a fine old vegetable.

This had been Jierck's trysting-tree in the times when the pastoral poem of his life was writing itself, a canto a day. Under this chestnut, one summer's eve, when the whole tree was a great bouquet of flowery tassels, Jierck had suddenly ventured to pop his shy question. Full-throated robins up in those very branches had shouted his sweetheart's "Yes," for all the birds and breezes to repeat.

Jierck, hidden in the thicket, looked kindly at the old tree. He smiled to recall the meetings there when he was a timid, clumsy lover. For a moment recollections, half comic and all pleasant, banished his agony of a man betrayed by a disloyal woman.

But presently he heard sounds that were not the light clash of falling leaf with fallen leaf. Footsteps and voices were coming. Jierck withdrew a little and watched. Two women appeared up the pathway, following their long shadows. They came out into the glade. It was his wife and her sister, furloughed for the evening, and on their way homeward.

Jierck beheld the woman's story written on her face,—the tablet where all stories of lives are written for decipherers to read. He saw

no wish there to expunge or revise the later chapters. His wife was still an insolent, brazen woman, the counterpart of her mistress on a lower plane.

Poor Jierck! he had been drawn to this spot, so he felt, to see his murderer and be stabbed over again. The exceeding weight of his agony came crushing down upon him. He shivered. It seemed to him that snow must suddenly have fallen with sunset. A moment ago it was not spring, nor summer, but very tolerable autumn; now winter had come, chilly and dreary. A friendless place to him this traitor world! Jierck felt smitten with degradation. He was utterly miserable, and the old chestnut-tree insulted him with memories of his dead hopes of happiness.

"I must have comfort," thought Jierck.

When sorrow is too sharp to be borne, and comfort must be had at once, men go to the anodynes and stimulants. Kosmos provides these in great variety. The four of most universal application are,

Tobacco, Alcohol, Marriage, Death.

Poor Jierck Dewitt wanted comfort at once. A whiff of smoke from his pipe was not concentrated enough, and he could not wait to try what virtue there was in bigamy.

"Rum or this!" he said wildly. The alternative "this" seemed to attract him for an

instant. He drew his knife from his belt, and felt along the cold edge. Was he about to taste that mighty narcotic, Death?

Death! He touched his knife-blade. Gloom alighted upon the landscape. The golden woods grew lurid. Silence, deeper than he had ever known, deepened and deepened, until he fancied that Nature was hushed and listening for his death-moan.

An imagined picture grew before his eyes:— Time, morning. Scene, this glade of the big chestnut. A man lies under the tree. The first sunbeams melt the frost that dabbles his hair. He must be a sound sleeper, for a chipmunk has picked his pockets of their crumbs, and now stands on his forehead, chuckling over his breakfast. Mrs. Jierck Dewitt enters the glade. She sees the sleeper. She starts, and approaches cautiously. She stares, and then looks up with a great, bold smile of relief and scorn. For the sleeper is her husband. He lies dead, with a knife in his breast.

“No!” hissed Jierck, dashing away this picture from his eyes. “I’ll not kill myself to please *her*.”

“Rum! I must have rum, or I shall go mad. The old man’s jug will be in the old place in the kitchen cupboard,” he continued.

He skulked along rapidly through the woods,

like a beast of prey. The great dull agony in his heart paused a moment. He could keep it down from maddening him, while he thought of his sorry consolation to come.

It was growing dusk now, and he was reckless. He stopped by the kitchen window of his father's house and peered in.

The family were at supper. These were the early years of the Revolution, and war had not yet utterly desolated this region. Squire De-witt's was still a prosperous household, and he, a fine old patriarch, presided at a liberal board. Opposite him sat the mild mother of the house. The harmony of a lifetime of love and companion thinking on companion cares had made her expression almost identical with her husband's. Pretty Kate, a daughter of her parents' old age, bustled the meal along, and hoped her Hendrecus was not getting hungry. Jierck's other sister, a widow, was making two smiles grow in the place of one, on her boy Tommy's round face, by cutting his gingerbread fatter than usual. The cat, from a dresser, watched every morsel and every sip, with a feline look, which is a thief look.

This homely scene, instead of soothing poor Jierck, was double bitterness to him.

“Curse the woman I made my wife!” he thought. “She has spoilt my chance of home

and fireside, of a happy age and children to love and reverence me. Curse her for making me hate my life!"

He turned away, half mean, half fierce, and stole in by the back-door to the cupboard.

Those were times, remember, before the demi-john and the spinning-wheel had given way to Webster's *Unabridged* and the melodeon. In every farmer's pantry stood a Dutch-bellied stone jug. It was corked with a corn cob, and looked arrogantly through the window at the old oaken bucket. Was there molasses in that jug? Not so; but rum fitzmolasses. The well-sweep grew stiff for want of exercise, moss covered the dry-rotten bucket, green slime in the stagnant well was only broken by the plunges of lonely old "*Rigdumbonnimiddikaimo*"; but the rum-jug was always alert and jolly, and never had time to look vacuous before it was a plenum again. It is hard to imagine those ages; for we have changed our manners now. Our brandy is dried up, our rum has run away, and this is *not* a land flowing with Monongahela.

Jierck stole, like a thief, into the pantry. There sat the great jug, as of yore. It was of gray stone-ware with blue splashes. Its spout was fashioned into a face on the broad grin. "*Comfort here!*" the grinning mask seemed to

wink, and did not reveal how short-lived and bastard was the comfort it promised. Jierck heaved up its clumsy heft, balanced it upon his lips, and swigged.

Yes,—not to be squeamish in terms,—this Patriot of the Revolution swigged. This was not patriotic, nor under the circumstances honorable, nor in any way wise or prudent. And of course, as his provocation is unknown to our time, we cannot appreciate his reckless despair.

If he had only stopped when he had enough! At the present day we never take too much of our anodynes and our stimulants. One weed, one toddy, one wife, one million, one Presidential term,—whenever wisdom whispers, *Satis*, we pause and echo, “*Satis* ‘t is.” Wisdom was younger in Jierck’s time. If her childish voice did at all admonish him, the gurgle in his throat made him deaf to the warning at his tympanum. He took too much, poor fellow! Pardon him, and remember that an ill-omened she-wolf had just crossed his path.

There is a sage and honorable law that limits the robbing of orchards,—“Eat your fill; but don’t fill your pockets.” Jierck was rash enough to violate this also. He pocketed a pint of his sorry comforter. He found an empty bottle labelled Hair-Oil. There were nameless unguents before Macassar, and this bottle had held

one of them. Jierck filled it from the jug, and made for the barn, just in time to evade pretty Kate carrying supper to the others and her Hendrecus.

Supper was done. Dusk was come. Jierck set out with his party for the rendezvous. The peril was considerable. Hanging was the penalty for being caught. So they sharpened their eyes, pricked up their ears, trod softly, and tried to persuade the runt pony to do the same. Jierck brought up the rear, in a state of sullen contempt.

At the cross-roads Major Skerrett and his companion met them. It was night now in the woods. A red belt of day behind Dunderberg stared watchfully at the party.

"I will go down to the house alone, as we arranged," whispered the Major. "The negro will admit me to the dining-room. Do you be ready on the lawn by the window at half past eight! It will be dark enough for safety by that time. When I open the window and whistle, jump in and take our man. That is my plan. If anything goes wrong, I will alter it. But nothing will go wrong. Good-bye!"

He moved away through the darkness.

The party waited in the woods, listening to the sounds of evening. It grew chilly. Jierck Dewitt retired again and again, and sipped from

his bottle, labelled Hair-Oil. He was ashamed of himself for violating his pledge to the Major. But he soliloquized, "I am only taking just enough to keep my spirits up,—just enough to make a man of me after my making a baby of myself at sight of that woman."

Just enough! It is not pleasant to betray the errors of the past; but it is a truth grave in this history that the unhappy fellow had much more than enough when, at half past eight, he halted his party under cover of the shrubbery on the lawn at Brothertoft Manor-House.

XII.

EIGHT o'clock, and Major Kerr sat sipping Madeira in the dining-room at Brothertoft Manor.

"What's the use of eight candles?" he said to Voltaire.

"Only four, sir," says the butler, depositing two branches on the table.

"I see eight, — no, sixteen. Well, let 'em burn! Economy be hanged! I say, nigger!"

"What, sir?" Voltaire perceived that his deteriorating process had been effectual. Kerr saw double and spoke thick.

"I'm tired of sitting here alone. Can't you sing me a song?"

"I used to sing like a boblink, sir; but since I lost my front tooth the music all leaks out in dribbles. There's a redcoat sargeant just come into the kitchen. He looks like a most a mighty powerful singer. Shall I bring him in?"

"Yes. I ain't proud. A Kerr can associate with anybody."

As Voltaire left the room, he picked up the Major's sword and pistols from the sideboard.

Plato was in the hall, stationed to watch the door of the parlor where the lady of the Manor was sitting solitary. His father handed him the arms. The seven seals of mystery had been opened, and Plato was deep in the plot.

"Take 'em, boy," says Voltaire, "and be ready!"

Ready for what? Neither divined. But Plato took the weapons with dignity, and became a generalissimo in his own estimation. He brandished the sword, and made a lunge at some imaginary antagonist. Then he lifted a cocked pistol, and took aim. It was comic in the dim hall to see him going through his silent pantomime. He thrust, he parried, he dropped his point, he bowed like an accomplished master of fence. He raised a pistol, bowed graciously, as if to say, "*Après vous, Monsieur*," touched trigger, assumed a look half triumph, half concern, then laid his hand upon his heart and smiled the smile of one whose wounded honor is avenged. All this was done without so much as a chuckle.

While Plato was at his noiseless gymnastics, Voltaire, through the pantry, had conducted the Sergeant into Major Kerr's presence.

Skerrett, with his moustache off, and in a disguise a world too shrunk for his shanks and shoulders, looked much less the hero than when

he first stepped forth upon these pages. Indeed, at this moment he did not feel very heroic.

He was sailing under false colors. He was acting a lie. He did not like the business, whatever the motive was. He took his seat *vis-à-vis* the rival Major, and thought, "If fair play is a jewel, I must give the effect of paste set in pinchbeck at this moment."

"Glad to see you, Sargeant," says Kerr, speaking thick. "That's right,"—to Voltaire. "Give him some wine! Fine stuff they have in this house. Better than regulation grog, Sargeant."

The new-comer nodded, and went at his supper vigorously.

"Goshshave th' King, Sargn! Buppers!" says Kerr, holding up his glass aslant and spilling a little.

"Bumpers!" responded the other.

"Frustate their politics. Confound their knavish tricks," chanted Kerr. "Rebblstricksh, I mean, Sargn. Cuffoud 'em. Buppers!"

"Bumpers!" Skerrett rejoined, still feeling great compunction at the part he was playing.

"Sargeant," says Kerr, "I'm going to tell you something."

Skerrett looked attention.

"I'm going to be married to-morrow,"—spoken confidentially.

"Ah!"

“Don’t say, ‘Ah !’ Sargeant. Ah expreshes doubtsh. Say, Oh ! Sargeant. I askitshpussonle-faver, Sargn. Say, Oh !”

“Oh !”

“That’s right. Oh is congratulation.” He made muddy work with the last word. “Yes, Sargeant, doocid pretty girl, doocid pretty property. Want to see her, Sargeant ?”

“No, I thank you.”

“Yes, you do, Sargeant. Don’t tell me ! I’m a lucky fellow, Sargeant. Always was with women. I’ll have her down in the parlor, by and by, and you can look through the crack of the door and see her. She loves me so much, Sargeant, that she’s gone up stairs to look at her wedding-dress and wish for to-morrow.”

This discourse, spoken thick, and the leer that emphasized it, quite dissipated all Major Skerrett’s scruples.

“Faugh !” thought he. “Everything is fair play against such a beast. I never comprehended before what a horror to a delicate woman must be marriage with such a creature. Life would drag on one long indignity, and every day fresh misery and fresh disgust. Faugh ! sitting here and hearing him talk gives me qualms,— me, a man of the world, who have certainly had time to outgrow my squeamishness. I could not tolerate the thought of giving

up any woman, even one with heart deflowered, to the degradation of this fellow's society. He shall not have Mr. Brothertoft's gentle daughter. No, not if I have to shoot him where he sits. No, not if I have to stab the lady."

Peter looked at his watch. Time was not up. He was compelled to bottle his indignation and listen civilly.

Kerr grew more and more confidential in his cups. Faugh ! the jokes he made ! the staves he trolled ! the winks he winked ! the imbecile laughs he roared ! the conquests he recounted in love and war ! Faugh, that such brutes have sometimes dragged the pure and the gentle down to their level ! Faugh, that they still grovel on our earth, so that the artist, compelled by the conditions of his work to paint such a *Silenus*, finds his unpleasant models thick about him, and paints under the sharp spur of personal disgust and personal harm !

The two Majors in the dining-room, the Lady of the Manor in a drowsy revery over the parlor fire, Lucy eager and trembling in her chamber,— for Voltaire has whispered that the hero has come,— Volante saddled, Plato gesticulating with sword and pistols ; — now let us see what the plotters without the Manor-House are doing.

XIII.

WHAT are the plotters without the Manor-House doing?

All, except Jierck Dewitt, are standing at ease, and waiting for their commander's signal. Old Sam Galsworthy has his hand on the muzzle of the runt pony, and at the faintest symptom of a whinny in reply to Volante's whinnies in the stable, Sam plugs the pony's nostrils with his thumbs and holds his jaws together with iron hand. Ike Van Wart leans on his gun, and looks dull. Hendrecus Canady stands to his gun, and looks sharp. Sergeant Lincoln-Brothertoft keeps himself in a maze,—for to think would be to doubt of success, and to doubt is to fail.

This of course is the moment when Jierck Dewitt should be "stiff as the Lord Chancellor," limber as the Lord Chief Acrobate, steady as a steeple, and silent as a sexton.

But Jierck is at present a tipsy man, in happy-go-lucky mood. He begins to grow impatient waiting in the cold and shamming sober. A

thought strikes him. He can do something more amusing than stand and handle a chilly trigger.

"I'm going to take a turn about the house to see all's safe, *Orderly*," whispered he to Lincoln-Brothertoft. "I leave you in charge of the party. Keep a sharp look-out. I will be back in half a jiff."

Jierck stole off into the darkness.

Recollections of former exploits hereabouts had revived in his muddled brain.

"Hair-oil's all gone," he thought. "Now if I could only get into the cellar of the old house, I should have my choice of liquors, just as I did ten years ago, when Lady Brothertoft had me caught and licked for breaking in. By Congress, it's worth a try! The cellar window-bars used to be loose enough. It won't do any harm to give 'em a pull all round. If one gives, I can tumble in, get a drink to keep my spirits up, and be back long before the Major calls."

His fancy was hardly so coherent as this, but he obeyed it. He crept about the house and fumbled at the bars of the nearest window. The windows opened on a level with the ground.

"No go," said he; "try another!" He did, and another.

At the third window the solder was loose

and a bar shaky. Jierck dug at the solder with his knife and worked the bar about. It still resisted, and he admonished it in a drunken whisper, "I 'm ashamed of you, you dum bit of rusty iron, keepin' a patriot away from Tory property. Give in now, like a good feller, before I git mad and do something rash."

At this the bar joined the patriots, and gave in. It came away in Jierck's hand. He laid the cold iron on the frosty grass. He could now take out the stone into which the bar had been set. He did so. That released the foot of the next bar. He bent this aside. There was room for him to squeeze through.

He carefully backed into the cellar.

It was drunkard's luck. A sober man would not have tried it. Moral: do not be too sober in your head or your heart, if you would pluck success among the nettles.

Jierck took a step forward in the Cimmerian darkness of the cellar. He fell plump into a heap of that rubbish which Voltaire's flaring dip revealed to us in the morning.

"This noise won't do," he thought. "One tumble will pass for rats. Another may bring Lady B. down stairs. I should n't like to see her standing here with a candle in one hand and a knife in the other. She 'd stick me, like pork. No; I must strike a light. A flash will do, to show me the way."

He unplugged his powder-horn with his teeth and poured a charge on the stone floor.

“Old Brindle did n’t know how many red-coats that horn of his was to be the means of boring through,” thought Jierck. “Powder’s an istooshn.”

In the dark his flint and steel tinkled together.

A spark flew. Fizz. *Fiat lux!* The powder flashed.

Cimmerian corners, barrels of curly shavings and rags out of curl, casks gone to hoops and staves, shattered furniture, all the rubbishy properties of a cellar scene, “started into light and made the lighter start.” Light gave them a knowing look and was out again. The scenery scuffled back into darkness.

Jierck afterward found that he had marked every object in that black hole, as they flung forward at the flash. He had marked the scene, and it was to haunt him always. At present, he was thinking of nothing but the wine-room. His fireworks had shown him the way clear to it. He saw also that the door was ajar, as Voltaire had left it in the morning.

He moved forward now without stumble or tumble. He felt his way into the wine-room. He touched the rough dusty backs of a battery of recumbent bottles. He grasped one by the

neck. With a skilful blow against the shelf, he knocked off the yellow-sealed muzzle.

“Fire away!” said he, presenting the weapon at his lips.

Gurgle.

He stopped to take breath. He felt like a boy again. The wine tasted as it did ten years ago, when he first stole into the cellar, and was punished for it.

“She can’t have me whaled this time,” he muttered. “Here goes again! What stuff it is!”

Gurgle a second time, and the cellar seems to listen.

But while that amber stream was flowing between the white stalactites in Jierck’s upper jaw, and the white stalagmites in his lower, and rippling against that pink stalactite his palate, before it leaped farther down the grotto,—suddenly:—

A scream above, a rush, a shot, a scuffle.

For an instant Jierck was paralyzed. He stood listening. The bottle, for which he had deserted his post, slipped through his alarmed fingers and crashed on the floor. The sound half recalled him to himself.

He turned and sprang for that dim parallelogram of lighter darkness,—the window where he had entered.

Awkwardly, drunkenly, trembling with haste and shame, he clambered up upon the sill and began to back out between the bars. His coat caught against the bent iron.

As he stopped to disengage it, he peered suspiciously back into the cellar.

A little spot of red glow in the midst of the blackness caught his eye.

“Aha!” he thought, “my powder lighted something tindery in that heap of rubbish. It will soon eat what it’s got, and go out on the stone floor. And if it don’t go out, let it burn! Blast the old house! it’s a nest of Tories. Blast it! the mistress had me thrashed like a dog. Blast the house! my wife was spoilt here, and that spoilt me. Blast it! let it burn, and show us the way out of the country!”

Jierck tore his coat from the bar, backed out, picked up his gun and skulked tipsily off to join his party.

XIV.

JIERCK DEWITT's companions waited, at first silently, then anxiously, for his return.

Moments passed, and he was still gone.

"I hope he hain't played us a trick," whispered Van Wart.

"Not he!" says honest Sam Galsworthy.

"I 'll tell you what it is, boys," whispers the root-doctor's son. Jierck has got liquor aboard. Taint mutiny to say so, now he 's gone. I heard him walk tipsy when we came from the barn. When we got here, I saw he stood too ramrod for a sober man. You know how it is. Since his wife went bad, he 's lived on rum for stiddy victuals. He swore off to Major Skerrett. But he did n't swear strong enough, or else some-thin' strange has drawed his cork."

"If that is so," said Lincoln-Brothertoft, "I must follow, and see that he does not risk himself or us. Watch, men, for your lives!"

"They may call that man Orderly Lincoln," says Hendrecus Canady, as the other disappeared about the house, "but I believe he 's Tommy

Jefferson or some other Congressman in disguise. He talks powerful dictionary. And how did he come to know this country like a hawk and like a hoppertoad both?"

It seemed sad and sorry business to Edwin Brothertoft to go prowling like a burglar about the home of his forefathers.

He followed Jierck around the rear of the house. All the familiar objects wore an unkindly, alienated look. The walls were grim, the windows were dark, the whole building said to him, "You are an exile and an intruder."

But he had no time for sentimental regrets. He turned the northern side of the house. A bright light burned in Lucy's chamber in the tower. He could see a shadowy figure moving behind the curtain.

"My child! in a few moments we shall meet," he thought.

Nothing to be seen of Jierck Dewitt! The sight of his daughter's form revived his anxiety. Peering into the dark, he passed about the corner of the turret.

He stopped opposite the parlor windows on the front. A shutter stood open. A faint light, as from a flickering wood-fire within, gleamed out into the hazy night. The window-sill was breast high to a man.

“There we used to sit,” he murmured, “my wife and I. There by the fire, in the evenings of autumns long passed, I have watched her love dying, and all my hopeful vigor dying,—dying into ashes.”

The mighty despotism of an old love mastered him for a moment. There was little bitterness in his heart. These scenes, once so dear, became dear to him again. He pardoned them for their unconscious share in the tragedy of his life.

“I must have one glance into that room,” he thought. “My memory of it will be a troublesome ghost in my brain, until I have laid the ghost with a sight of the reality.”

He stole forward softly over the crisp, frosty grass, and looked cautiously in at the window.

Mrs. Brothertoft was seated alone before the fire. Guilt must sit alone and dwell alone. Loneliness is the necessity and the punishment of guilty hearts. No friends are faithful but the noble and the pure, and them guilt dreads and rejects. Mrs. Brothertoft was sitting alone in the fire-lit room. It was an instant before her husband’s eyes could distinguish objects within. He drew close to the window. He perceived her. A thrill of pity and pardon killed all his old rancors. He felt that, though he must war against her for his daughter’s sake, he fought, reserving an infinite tenderness for his foe.

And she within,—had she heard that stealthy step of his upon the stiffened grass and the dry leaves? Had his faint sigh penetrated to her, as she sat silent and moody? Did she feel the magnetism of human presence,—the spiritual touch of a spirit wounded by her wrong? Or was it merely that in these days of alarm and violence she kept her senses trained and alert?

He saw her cruel face turn suddenly, stare into the night, and mark an intruder.

For one breath he stood motionless.

Then, as she sprang forward to the window and shouted for help, he turned and ran around the rear of the house to the spot where he had left his comrades.

X V.

HALF past eight, and the two majors still sat *vis-à-vis* in the dining-room.

“I am tired of this,” thought Skerrett. “I have had enough of swallowing bumpers to this fellow’s ‘boppers.’ I have heard enough of his foulness, his boasts, and his drivel. I could never have been patient so long except for the lady’s sake. Every word and look of his is an imperative command to me to make sure of her safety. Yes, yes, Voltaire! You need n’t nod and wink that she is ready and anxious. Ten minutes more, to be positive that my men are come,—and then, Major, please the Goddess of Liberty, I’ll forbid your banns, and walk off with your person. I’m sorry for you, brute as you are. And you will not like your wineless quarters with Old Put.”

Monstrous long minutes, those final ten! At the rate of a thousand à minute, shades of doubt drifted across Peter’s mind.

Who has not known suspense and its miseries? — something hanging over him by a hair,

or he hanging by a hair over nothing. Patience, Peter Skerrett! The pendulum ticks. It checks off the minutes, surely.

And while those minutes pass, tipsy Jierck Dewitt is at work in the cellar, trying to drown the misery that this guilty house has caused him.

The ten were almost ended, when Brothertoft started to search for the stray leader, that other victim of a woman's disloyalty.

It was in the very last of the ten that Mrs. Brothertoft turned suddenly and saw an unknown face staring in at her, as she sat in the dusky parlor.

Time was up. Major Skerrett walked quietly to the window, threw up the sash, opened the shutters, and whistled in his men.

Three only came leaping in at the summons.

XVI.

ENTER through the dining-room window, Ike Van Wart, old Sam Galsworthy, and Hendrecus Canady.

At the same moment Mrs. Brothertoft's cry for help rang through the house. Jierck De-witt in the cellar heard it. Lucy in her turret heard it. Plato in the hall could not but hear it, close at his ears.

Plato was still on guard, playing pantomime with the weapons. He stood, with pistol out-stretched, pointing at an imaginary foe. It was a duello he was fancying. He had received the other party's fire unscathed. Now his turn was come. He proudly covered his invisible antagonist with his pistol at full cock.

“Apologize, sir,” whispered Plato, “or — ”

Here came his mistress's loud scream for help. Plato was petrified.

Mrs. Brothertoft rushed into the hall.

There was the negro, standing like a statue, holding forth a weapon to her hand. She seized

it. Her sudden fright reacted into a sharp fury. She was fearless enough, this cruel virago. The touch of a deadly weapon made her long to be dealing death. She heard the scuffle in the dining-room.

“Come!” whispered her old comrades, the Furies, closing in, and becoming again body of her body, spirit of her spirit. “Come, take your chance! Here are marauders,—rebels! Shoot one of them! Practise here! Then you will get over any scruples against blood, and can kill the people you hate, if they ever come in your way. Now, madam!”

Such a command ran swiftly through her brain. She opened the dining-room door.

Her scream told the assaulting party they were discovered. They were pinioning Major Kerr in double-quick time. He sat in tipsy bewilderment, mumbling vain protests and vainer threats.

Not one of the group about the captive observed the mistress of the house, as she softly opened the door.

But another did.

Edwin Brothertoft, tardily following his party, was clambering through the window.

He saw his wife at the door. She must be kept from the danger of any chance shot or chance blow in the scuffle. This was his im-

pulse. He sprang forward to put her away gently.

She instantly fired at the approaching figure.
He fell.

He staggered, and fell. His head struck the claw-foot of the table, and he lay there motionless, with face upturned and temple bleeding.

Her husband ! She knew him at once.

His thin, gray hair drawn back from his mild, dreamy face, with the old pardoning look she remembered so well and hated so fiercely,—there lay the man she had wronged and ruined, dead ; yes, as it seemed, dead at last by her own hand.

“ My husband ! ”

She said it with a strange, quiet satisfaction.

Every one paused an instant, while she stood looking at her work, with a smile.

She had done well to wait. Those impalpable weapons she used to see in the air had become palpable at last. Yes ; she had waited wisely. This was self-defence, not murder. She had the triumph without the name of crime.

“ So you must come prowling about here, and be shot,” she said to him, as if they were alone together.

And she spurned him with her foot.

As by this indignity she touched and broke down the last limit of womanliness, she felt a

great exulting thrill of liberty, a mad sense of power. Nothing could offer itself now that she was not willing to do. Any future cruelty was a trifle to this. Her joy in this homicide promoted it to a murder.

She looked up. The group about Kerr were all regarding her. She laughed triumphantly in a dreadful bedlam tone, and flung her pistol at Major Skerrett.

He caught the missile with his hand.

“Are you mad?” said he. “Do you know that you have killed your husband? Take her into the next room, men!”

“Come, madam,” said Galsworthy, gently. “You did not know it. We are sorry it was not one of us. We are Manor men, come to take this Britisher prisoner, not to harm anybody or anything here.”

“Curse you all!” she cried, and she made a clutch at Sam’s honest face. “I am not sorry,—not I! No, glad, glad, glad! And I’ll have you all served so,—no, hung, hung for spies!”

“Take her away, men!” repeated Skerrett. “We must confine her. But not here with this dead man. Gently now, as gently as you can; remember she’s a woman!”

“Woman!” says Canady, holding her fingers from his face. “No, by the Continental Congress! she’s a hell-cat.”

"No hope for him with such a wound as that," said the Major, kneeling over Brothertoft and examining his bloody forehead. "He seems to be quite dead. See to him, Sappho! Stand by Major Kerr, Van Wart, while I dispose of the woman!"

"Sargin," mumbled Kerr, "I'm sashfied 't's all a mshtake."

The two men dragged Mrs. Brothertoft, struggling furiously, across into the parlor, and forced her into an arm-chair before the fire.

Skerrett followed. Plato was in the hall, terrified at the mischief he had caused.

"Run, Plato," said the Major, "and have Miss Lucy's mare out. And you, Voltaire, don't look so frightened, man! We must make the best of it. Bring the young lady down some back way! She must not see her father or her mother. Horrible, horrible, all! A dreadful end of all this sorrow and sin!" *

He passed into the parlor.

The flickering firelight gave a dim reality to the objects there. They stirred, they advanced and retreated. The rich old family furniture seemed eager to take part in the tragic acts now rehearsing.

Major Skerrett, in the dimness, marked the Vandyck on the wall. The torn curtain had not been repaired. It still fell away at the upper

corner, revealing the heads of Colonel Brothertoft and his white charger. A startling resemblance the portrait bore to him now lying dead across the hall. It might almost seem as if the spirit of the departed, with a bitter interest in these scenes of old sorrow and joy, and in the personages who still moved in them, had identified itself with the picture, and was stationed there to watch events.

A single glance gave Major Skerrett these objects and impressions. He turned to the mistress of the house. She sat, baffled and glaring, held in the arm-chair by the two men.

“Madam,” said Skerrett gravely, “I regret that I must confine you. You have shown your power to do harm, and threatened more. I cannot take you with me for safety. If I left you free, you could start pursuit, and we should be caught and hung, as you desire. Boys, tie her in the chair. So as not to hurt her now; but carefully, so that she cannot stir hand or foot. I hate to seem to maltreat a woman.”

They belted her and corded her fast in the chair. She wrestled frantically, and cursed them with unwomanly words, such as no woman should know.

“There you are, ma’am, fast!” says Galsworthy, drawing back. “You’re tied so you won’t feel it, and so you can’t hurt yourself or anybody else.”

Skerrett heaped up the fire to burn steadily and slowly. Then, with great tenderness of manner, he laid a shawl over Mrs. Brothertoft's shoulders.

"Madam," said he again, "I am sincerely sorry that I must imprison you. I have tried to make you as comfortable as possible. The night is fine. This fire will burn till morning. I must take your people all away with me, for safety; but they shall be despatched back, as soon as we are out of danger, to release you, and"—here his voice grew graver—"to bury the husband whom you have killed, and in whose death you triumph."

She made no answer. All the flickering of the fire could not shake the cold look of defiance now settled on her handsome face. The color had faded from her cheeks. Her countenance—rimmed with her black hair, disordered in the struggle—was like the marble mask of a Gorgon.

The Major paused a moment, listening if she would speak. "It seems brutal to leave her so," he thought. "But what else can I do? She will grow calm by and by, and sleep. There are worse places to pass the night in than a comfortable arm-chair before a good fire."

"Good night, madam," he said, with no trace of a taunt in his tone.

The cold look gave place to an expression of utter malignancy and rage, at her impotence to do further harm.

“Move on, men,” said the Major, and followed them.

At the door he turned to survey the scene once more. Its tragedy terribly fascinated him.

There sat the lady, with the fire shining on her determined profile. She was quiet now; and, from the picture, the heads of the soldier and his white horse as quietly regarded her.

Skerrett closed the door softly.

He listened an instant without. Would she relent? Would he hear a sob, and then a great outburst of penitent agony, when, left to herself, she faced the thought of this ghastly accident, which she had adopted as a crime?

He listened. Not a sound!

There was no time to lose, and the Major hurried after his men.

XVII.

ALL this while Lucy had been waiting anxiously in her chamber in the turret.

As twilight faded, she took her farewell of river, slopes, groves, and mountains. With dying day, all that beloved scene sank deeper into her memory.

At last Voltaire came and whispered: "They are come. Be ready when I call!"

She was ready; and now, in these few moments, before she blew out her light and departed, she studied the familiar objects about her with new affection.

It seemed to her as if all the observation of her past life had been half-conscious and dreamy.

The sudden ripening of her character, by this struggle with evil, gave all her faculties force.

Commonplace objects were no longer commonplace. Everything in her room became invested with a spiritual significance.

"Good bye, my dear old mirror!" she thought. "You have given me much dumb sympathy when I smiled or wept. You could not answer

my tearful questions, why my innocent life must be so dreary. I begin to comprehend at last the Myself you have helped me to study. Good bye, my bedside! I had no mother's lap to rest my head on when I prayed. But your cool, white cushion never repelled me, whether I knelt in doubt or in agony. Good bye, my pillow! thanks for many a night of oblivion! thanks for many an awakening with hope renewed! Good bye, kind, sheltering walls of my refuge! The child you have known so long is a woman. Girlhood ends sharply here. The woman says, Good bye."

As she stood waiting for the signal of flight, suddenly her mother's cry of alarm broke the silence.

At that ill-omened voice, Lucy trembled, and for one moment despaired.

Then came the sharp crack of the pistol-shot.

The shock startled her into courage. This note of battle joined awaked all the combatant in her. "I cannot hide here," she thought, "while they are in danger for my sake. I cannot fight, but I may help, if any one is hurt."

One more glance about her chamber, and then she closed the door, and shut herself out into the wide world.

At the top of the staircase, the sound of a struggle below met her. She paused, and shud-

dered. Not for fear. Timidity seemed to be expunged from the list of her possible emotions. She shuddered for horror.

She recognized her mother's voice. She heard those bedlam cries and curses. These were the tones of a woman who had ejected the woman, and was a wild beast. Feminine reserve had dropped at last, and the creature appeared what her bad life had slowly made her.

"What final horror has done this?" thought Lucy.

She leaned cautiously over the banisters, and beheld the scene in the hall. A sickening sight for a daughter to see! A strange scene in that proud and orderly house! Outward decorum, at least, had always reigned there. Evil had now, at last, undergone its natural development into violence.

Pale and shivering with excitement, but conscious of a new-born sense of justice and an inexorable hardness of heart against guilt, Lucy leaned forward, and saw her mother struggling with the two men. She saw the alarmed negroes. She saw the gentleman, whom she identified at a glance as the expected hero, and heard his grave voice as he ordered Plato to make her horse ready and Voltaire to seek herself.

"A dreadful end of all this sorrow and sin!" she heard him say.

Lucy repeated these words to herself in a whisper. "A dreadful end! What does he mean? I do not see my father. Can it be? Did she fire the shot? Has she murdered the body, as she has done her best to kill the soul?"

Lucy sprang down the stairs, by Voltaire, and into the dining-room.

There sat Major Kerr, drivelling entreaties to his impassive sentry.

And on the floor, with a stream of blood flowing over his temple and clotting his gray hair, lay a man, — her father!

Sappho was moaning over him.

Lucy flung her aside, almost fiercely. She crushed her own great cry of anguish. She knelt by him and lifted the reverend head with her arms.

And so it happened that when Edwin Brothertoft, stunned by a sharp blow from a glanced bullet and by his heavy fall, in a moment came to himself and unclosed his eyes, he saw his daughter's face hanging over him, and felt her arms about his neck. Her tender arms embracing him, — her lips at his.

Ah, moment of dear delight! when life renewed perceived that love was there to welcome it and to baptize its birth with happy tears!

Here Jierck Dewitt reappeared upon the scene. Alarm had fallen upon him, like water on a

tipsy pate under a pump. He was sober enough to perceive that he must justify his outsidership and make his desertion forgotten. He looked through the window, took his cue, and then hustled forward officiously. He spoke, to be sure, with a burr, and trod as if the floor were undulating gayly beneath him; but why may not haste and eagerness make tongue and feet trip?

“Hooray, Ike!” cries he; “I’ve made all right outside. Plato’s just bringing out your horse, Miss. Thank you for looking after the Sergeant, Miss,” continued Jierck, blundering down on his knees beside Mr. Brothertoft. “How do you find yourself, Sergeant? O, you’ll do. Only a little love-tap the ball gave you. A drop of rum,—capital thing rum, always,—a drop on a bit of brown paper, stuck on the scratch, and you’re all right. Feel a little sick with the jar, don’t you? Yes. Well, we must get you outside into the air. Now, then, make a lift. Thank you, Miss. Now, again. Why, Sergeant, you’re almost as steady on your pins as I am. Now, Miss, you hold him on that side, and here I am on this, stiff as the Lord Chancellor. Think you can step over the window-sill, Sargeant? Well done! And here we are, out in the fresh air! And here’s the boy with the horse. All right! All right, Major; here we are, waiting for you!”

The last was said to Major Skerrett, who came hurrying out after them.

“ You are not badly hurt, thank God ! ” he said, grasping his friend’s hand.

“ No,” replied the other, still feeble with the shock, “ Heaven does not permit such horror. What have you done with her ? ”

“ I have left her confined in the parlor. We bound her there, as tenderly as might be. She cannot suffer in person at all.”

“ I suppose I had better take your word for it.”

“ You must. We must not dally a moment. Some straggler may have heard the pistol-shot and be on our track. Now, boys, mount the Major on his pony.”

“ My daughter, Skerrett ; you will give her your hand for good-will,” said the father.

In the hazy night she could but faintly see her paladin, and he her. There was no time for thanks and compliments. No time for Lucy to search for the one look with all the woman in it, and the one word with all the spirit in it, that might express her vast passion of gratitude. She gave him her hand, containing at least one lobe of her heart. He pressed it hastily, and as certainly a portion of his heart also was in his palm, there may have been an exchange of lobes in the hurry.

"Hoist away, Sam!" said Hendrecus Canady, buckling to one of Major Kerr's limp legs.

"Ay, ay!" rejoined Galsworthy, on his side boosting bravely at the lubberly carcass of the prisoner, while Ike Van Wart held the runt pony's head. "Seems to me these Britishers get drunker when they're drunk than we do."

"We're so full of the spirit of '76," rejoined the root-doctor's son, "that no other kind of spirit can please us."

"Cooducher take summddy elsh, now, boysh?" boosily entreated poor Kerr; "Shrenry Clidn wantsh me."

Ah, Major! Sir Henry must continue to want you. Nobody listens to your deteriorated King's English and no more of it shall be here repeated.

"We have not a moment to lose," said Major Skerrett. "We must not let our success grow cold. I have my prisoner, Mr. Brothertoft, and your daughter is with you. Each of us will take care of his own. For the first ten miles we had better separate. I, with our friend the Major, will make a dash along the straight road, and you will take to the by-paths and the back country, as we agreed. If there is any chase, it will be after us, and we can all fight. I will give you charge of all the non-combatants. Voltaire, you and your family will travel with your master."

“ Yes, sir,” says Voltaire, “ we never want to see this house again, so long as she’s there. The women will come in the morning, and they can cut her loose.”

“ Well, your master will settle that. Until Miss Lucy is out of danger you must all stay by her. Where’s Jierck Dewitt ?”

“ Here, sir,” says Jierck, from behind Volante.

“ You ’ve deceived me, and been drinking, Jierck.”

“ I have, Major,” the repentant man replied. “ I saw my wife going by, and everything grew so black that I had to fire up a little, or I should have stuck a knife into me. But I ’m all right now. Trust me once more !”

“ I must ! Go with the lady ! Bring her safe through, and I will forget that you have forgotten yourself.”

The two parties separated with “ Good bye ! God speed !”

Major Kerr made an attempt at “ *Au revoir*, Miss Lucy.” But his vinous consonants could not find their places among his vinous vowels, and his civility was inarticulate.

Skerrett halted, and watched Volante among the yellow trees, until there was not even a whisk of her tail to be seen across the luminous haze of the cool starlit night of October.

“ Noble horse ! lovely lady !” he thought.

“It is a sacrifice not to accompany and protect her ; but she will be safe, and my duty is with my prisoner. Now, ought I not to go back and tell the wife that she did not kill her husband ? Time is precious. . She would only curse and say she was sorry she missed. No ; I cannot bear again to see a woman so dewomanized. I cannot bear to think of that cruel virago as the mother of this delicate girl. No ; let her stay there alone, and think of herself as a murderer ! Perhaps remorse may visit her in the dead of night, — perhaps repentance in the holy stillness of dawn.”

Peter took his last look at the mansion. It stood dim and unsubstantial in the mist, and silent as a cenotaph.

He overtook his men, and pushed rapidly and safely along. But still a vague uneasiness beset him, lest, in these days of violence, some disaster might befall that deserted house and its helpless tenant. Long after he was involved in the dusky defiles of the Highlands, he found himself pausing and looking southward. Every sound in the silent night seemed a cry for help from that beautiful Fury he had left before the glimmering fire, with the portrait watching her, like a ghost.

Poor Kerr ! plaintive at first, then sullen, then surly, then doleful. The runt pony set its legs

hard down on *terra firma*, and bumped the bumptiousness all out of him.

All the good nature of his captors could not better his case. He was sadly dejected in mind and flaccid in person when the party issued from the Highlands, a little after late moonrise.

Major Skerrett only waited till he saw the pumpkins of the Fishkill plain, lying solitary or social, and turning up their cheeks to the cool salute of wan and waning Luna. Then he gave his prisoner to Van Wart and Galsworthy, to be put to bed at Putnam's quarters, and himself, with Hendrecus, turned back to meet the fugitives.

Let us now trace them on their flight from Brothertoft Manor.

X V I I I .

THE other party of fugitives took a more circuitous route, to the east, through that scantily peopled region.

Volante stepped proudly along, pricking up her ears to recognize familiar bugbears, and to question strange stocks and stones, whether they were "miching malicho" to horse-flesh.

Brothertoft walked by his daughter's side. Only now and then in their hurried march could he take her hand and speak and hear some word of tender love. But the consciousness in each of the other's presence, and the knowledge of the new birth of the holiest of all the holy affections between them, was sufficient. A vague bliss involved them as they hurried through the dim night. And both evaded the thought of that Hate they had left behind,—that embodied Hate, helpless and alone, at Brothertoft Manor.

The negroes trotted along, babbling comically together.

Jierck Dewitt led the way in silence.

"I shall never dare to face Major Skerrett again, if I don't bring these people straight through,"—so he thought. "I am just sober enough to walk my chalk if I pin my eyes to it. If I look at anything else, or think of anything else, this path 'll go to zigzagging, and splitting up into squirrel-tracks, and climbing up trees. Old Voltaire says he don't know these back roads very well. If I lose the track, we shall be nowhere."

The region a mile back from the river was mostly forest then, with scattered clearings. Often the course of our fugitives was merely a wood-road, or a cow-path, or an old trail. There were giant boles stopping the way, and prone trunks barricading it. There were bogs and thickets to avoid.

It is bewildering business to travel through a forest in the dark. Jierck Dewitt knew this well. He did not distract his attention with talk, or recalling the events of the evening. He held tight with all his eyes and all his wits to the track, commanding it not to divide or meander. This severe application steadied his brain. He slowly sobered. The fine fumes of his potations of Brothertoft Madeira, in the cellar, exhaled. The coarser gases of rum from the paternal jug split their exit through the sutures of his skull.

It seemed a moment, it seemed a millennium, it was an hour, when the party reached the foot of Cedar Ridge, almost three miles from the Manor-House.

Cedar Ridge is a famous look-out. "What you cannot see from there is not worth seeing," say the neighbors. It rises some three hundred feet above the level of the river, and surveys highlands north, uplands and lowlands south, with Janus-like vision.

Long before Hendrecus Hudson baptized the North River, Cedar Ridge was a sacred mount — a hill of Sion — to the Redskins. Fire had disforested the summit, and laid bare two bosomy mounds, stereoscopic counterparts, with a little depression between. A single cedar, old as the eldest hills, grew in this hollow. Around it had generations of frowzy Indian braves held frantic powwows, and danced their bow-legged minuets. Many a captive had suffered the fate of Saint Sebastian against its trunk, and dabbed the roots with his copper-colored blood. Savory fragments of roast Iroquois had fattened the soil. Fed on this unwholesome diet, and topped every winter by Boreas, the tree made hard, red flesh, and bloated into a stunted, wicked-looking Dagon, as gnarled and knobby as that old yew-tree of Fountains Abbey, which — so goes the myth — was Joseph of Arima-

thea's staff,—planted by him there when he was on his tour to convert the hairy Britons from *Angli* to *Angeli*.

A famous point of view was Cedar Ridge, named after this little giant, this squat sovereign among evergreens.

Such a landmark attained without error, Jierck Dewitt began to feel secure. He could relax his strict attention to his duties as guide, and let his thoughts confuse him again.

The moment he began to review the events of the evening with a sobered brain, he grew suddenly troubled.

He halted where the forest ceased on the ridge, and the two bare mounds with the low cedar appeared against the sky. He paused there, and let Voltaire overtake him.

This was the third night of that old brave's travels. The present pace was telling on him. He was puffing loud and long, as he stopped at Jierck's signal. The others passed on up the ridge. The white mare became a spot of light in the open.

“Voltaire,” whispered Jierck, “I did n't see the Mistress around when we left the Manor. Do you know what was done with her?”

“Where was you, that you did n't see?” asks Voltaire, taking and yielding air in great gasps between every word.

“Never mind that! What became of her?”

“Why you know (puff) that she fired (gasp) a pistol (explosion and sigh) at Master; and everybody thought (wheeze) that she’d shot him dead.” Here Voltaire took in a gallon or so of night air, and delivered it slowly back, by the pint, in the form of a chain of clouds, as white as if they came from the lungs of a pure Caucasian.

This speech explained half the mystery to Jierck. His curiosity seemed to become more troublesome. He continued anxiously: “Yes, yes, I know,”—which he did not until this moment. “But what was done with her afterwards. I was outside, doing my part there.”

“You was outside, was you?” says Voltaire, slowly recovering fluency. “Well, I guess they wanted you inside.”

“A man can’t be in two places at once. What did they want me for?”

“Them two boys—the root-doctor’s son and Samuel Galsworthy—is as spry as any two boys I ever see. Mighty spry and strong and handy boys they is; but they had a’most a orkud job with Mistress, she tearing and scratching so. They wanted another hand bad; but they got through, and fixed her up right at last.”

“Fixed her! How?”

“What you in such an orful hurry about? Let a man take breff, won’t you?”

"Yes; but speak quick! What did they do with her? Is she left there?"

"Leff thar!" says Voltaire, relapsing into full patois. "Whar would dey leave her? She 's done tied up in a big arm-cheer in de parlor. An' dar she 'll stay all dis bressed night, jess like a turkey truss up fur to be roast." And he gave a little, triumphant chuckle, that seemed to remember old cruelties he had suffered at her hands.

Jierck made no answer. He seemed to need breath as much as the negro. He gave a little gasp, and sprang up the hill-side.

Puzzled, Voltaire followed slowly after.

While they talked, the others had climbed to the top of the ridge, and halted to rest where the old cedar stood barring the way.

Jierck Dewitt came panting up to the summit.

He turned and glanced hastily over the hazy breadth of slumbering landscape below.

Belts of mist lay in the little valleys. Beyond was the river, a broad white pathway, like a void. And beyond again, the black heaps of the mountains westward. Here and there in the vague, a dot of light marked a farm-house. The lanterns of the British frigates were to be seen twinkling like reflections of stars in water.

It may have been fancy, but in the silence Lucy thought that she heard the far-away sound

of the Tartar's bell striking four bells, ten o'clock, and her consorts responding.

Jierck continued peering intently into the dark.

His seeming alarm communicated itself to the party.

"What is it?" said Brothertoft. "Do you fear pursuit?"

"No," whispered Jierck.

His monosyllable sent a shiver to all their hearts. There was a veiled scream in this single word,—a revelation of some terrible panic awaiting them.

"I must see farther," resumed Dewitt, in the same curdling tone; and he sprang up the mound on the right.

Edwin Brothertoft, impressed by this strange terror, followed.

He was within a dozen feet of the summit, and its wider reach of view, when Jierck leaped down and seized him tight by both shoulders. Jierck caught breath. Then, with his face close to the other's,—"My God!" he hissed, "I've set the house on fire. We've left that woman there, tied, to burn to death."

XIX.

EDWIN BROTHERTOFT shook off the man's clutch of horror, and stared southward.

A dull glow, like the light of moonrise through mist, was visible close to the dark line of the horizon.

Instantly, as he looked, the glow deepened. The black mass of the Manor-House appeared against the light. The fire must be in the rear and below. An alarm-gun from the frigate came booming through the silence.

While they stood paralyzed, Edwin Brothertoft sprang down from the mound, tore his daughter from the saddle, and was mounted himself quick as thought.

“I must save her!” he cried, — “your mother, my wife!”

He was gone.

A moment they could see the white horse, like a flash of light, as she flung down the break-neck hill-side.

Then she leaped into the mist, and a moment more they could hear her hoofs clattering.

They stood appalled and speechless.

Heart-beat by heart-beat it seemed that the fire grew intenser. All the world was blotted out for the gazers, except that one red spot, like a displaced moonrise, far to the southward.

Fire was not master yet. Who could say? Only three long miles. He might save her. Other succor might come.

Lucy gave one more look into that ocean of mist where she knew her father was struggling. Then, quick but quiet, she seized poor Jierck Dewitt's arm.

"Come," she said; "show me the way,— the shortest way. I will follow my father."

XX.

BROTHERTOFT galloped down the hill-side. He had no whip or spur, but the mare took in his passion, made it her own, and dashed forward madly. No winding by comfortable curves for them! They bore straight for the house.

Three miles from Cedar Ridge,—three miles to go! and broken country, all hill and gully! No sane man could gallop it by day. A night ride there might be the dream of a madman. There were belts of forest, dense and dark, with trees standing thick as palisades. There were ravines crowded with thorny thickets. There were stony brooks, and dry channels stonier. There were high walls slanting up the sharp slopes of the scattered clearings. Down was steep, and up was steep, and it was all up and down. But, though darkness trebled the danger, horse or rider never shrank. They bore straight on. Three miles to go!

And while they galloped, the rider's thought galloped. Sometimes it burst out into a cry of encouragement for his horse; sometimes it was

unspoken ; but all the while it went on wildly, thus : —

“ On, Volante ! Straight for that light to the south ! Fires move fast ; we must go faster. Only three miles away, and there she sits bound, — and the flames coming, — she I once loved, God knows how faithfully ! Gallop, gallop, Volante !

“ Bravely ! here we are down the ridge ! Now, stretch out over this smooth bit of clearing ! Yes ; that black line is a stone wall. Measure it, Volante ! Not four feet ! Good practice for our first leap ! Easy now, steady ! Hurrah ! Over and a foot to spare ! Well done, horse ! And I have been a plodding foot-soldier ! But I can ride still, like a boy, side-saddle or no saddle. A Brothertoft cannot lose the cavalier. We shall win.

“ What, Volante ? Nothing to fear, — that white strip in the dell ! Only a brook. Barely twelve feet to leap. Never mind the dark and the bad start ! Remember my wife, — she burns, if we flinch. Now, together ! Hurrah ! Over, thank God ! Splashed, but safe over and away !

“ A clearing again. Shame, Volante ! Are you a ploughman’s horse, that you labor so clumsily in these furrows ? See that horrible glow upon the sky ! This wood hides it again. Idle forest ! why was it not burned clean from the ground a century ago ? Everything baffles.

No, Volante! No turning aside for this windrow! Over, over! Through, through, and now straight on! Yes; the hill is steep, but we must gallop down it. No stumbling. What! another wall, and higher? You shrink! No,—you must. She shall not burn! Now, God help us! Down? No; up and off! Hurrah!

“How we have rattled through those two miles! And here is the road. Easier travelling, if you can only take that worm fence! The top bars are sure to be rotten. A fair start, my good mare, and do your best! Bravely again! I knew we should crash over. Plain sailing now! What, limping, flagging, Volante? Shame! This is a road fit for a lady’s summer-evening canter. Shake out, Volante! Let me see your stride! Show your Lincolnshire blood! The winner in this race win’s Life,—LIFE, do you hear? Wake up there, you farmers! Turn out and help! Fire at Brothertoft Manor. FIRE!

“Faster, faster! Are we too late? Never! I see the glow brighten against the sky; but the night is still as death; fire will move slow. We shall see at the turn of the road. Faster now! She must not burn, sitting there, where I saw her by the dear fireside of the years gone by,—sitting bound, and the flames snarling. Ah! I so loved her! I so trusted her! We were young. Life was so beautiful! God was

so good! It was miserable that she should wound me, and more cruelly wound her own soul. But I have forgiven her. O, let me save her, if only to speak peace and pardon! She shall not burn. A dozen strides, and we can see the house. Perhaps this great light is the stables. No,—everything! Fire everywhere. Too late! too late! Never! I can burn. She shall not."

And they galloped up the lawn.

XXI.

“I AM FIRE, a new-comer on the scene at Brothertoft Manor-House.

“I was a spark from Jierck Dewitt’s flint, a flash of his powder, a feeble smoulder, a pretty, graceful little flame, peering about for something nutritious. I was weak. I get force as I go. Let me once fairly touch fuel, and I will roar you, roar you,—ay, and roast you too !

“What a grand pile of rubbish I see, now that I can light up this dusky den of a cellar ! Let me burrow here ! Let me scamper here ! Aha, I am warm and strong ! A leap now ! Hurrah ! I am so large and vigorous that I can multiply myself. Go, little flames, rummage everywhere. Blaze, my children, flash in the corners, find what you like, eat and grow fierce. Grow fierce and agile ! I mean to exhibit you by and by. You must presently run up stairs, make yourselves broad and slender, dance, exult, and devour everywhere.

“A drop of the famous Brothertoft Madeira, now, for Fire and family ! Here goes at the

wine-room. I cannot stop to draw corks. Down go the shelves! Crash go the bottles! Drink, flames, drink! What nectar! How this black hole of a cellar shines! Fine wine makes me hungry for finer fare! I could eat titbits now. Perhaps I shall find them up stairs. A cradle with a fat bambino,—that would be a sweet morsel! A maiden's bed with a white-limbed maiden on it,—that I could take finely. Come flames, my children, up stairs, and let us see what we can find! Up, my strongest, my hungriest, my drunkest flames! up and follow!

“I am FIRE! This house and all that be in it are mine.”

X X I I .

MRS. BROTHERTOFT sat in the parlor of the deserted mansion, bound, helpless, and alone.

She was exhausted and weak after her furious struggle with her captors. Mental frenzy had wearied her mind.

As Major Skerrett closed the door, and she was left solitary, a little brief sleep, like a faint, fell upon her.

It could have lasted but a moment, for when she suddenly awoke, the final footsteps of the retiring party were still sounding upon the gravel road.

She listened intently. The sound ceased. Human presence had departed. Silence about her,—except that the fire on the hearth hissed and muttered, as fire imprisoned is wont to do, in feeble protest against its powerlessness.

This moment of sleep seemed to draw a line sharp as death between two eras in Mrs. Brothertoft's history. From the hither side of this emphatic interval of oblivion she could survey her past life apart from the present. Violence, Force,

had at last intervened in her career, and made their mark sharp as the sudden cleft of an earthquake in a plain.

She had now the opportunity, as she sat bound, strictly but not harshly, before a comfortable fire, to review her conduct and approve or condemn. She could now ask herself why Force had come in to baffle her plans,—what laws she had broken to merit this inevitable penalty of failure and insulting punishment.

There was a pause in her life, such as is given to all erring and guilty lives many times in life, and to all souls in death, to look at past ruin quietly, and plan, if they will, with larger wisdom for the time to come.

She rapidly put together her facts, and without much difficulty comprehended the plot of Kerr's capture and Lucy's evasion. It angered her to be defeated by a "silly child," as she had named her. But she put this aside for the moment. A graver matter was to be considered.

She thought of her husband, lying in the dining-room, slain, as she supposed, by her hand.

Then, in her soul, began a great and terrible battle. "You are free!" her old companion Furies whispered her. "Free of that incubus, your husband. Such triumph well repays you for the insult of a few hours' bondage."

But then a low voice within her seemed to ask,

“Triumph! Can you name it triumph that you have trampled on your womanhood, and done murder to a man who gave you only love and only pity when you wronged him?”

“Be proud of yourself, beautiful creature!” whispered the Furies. “You are an imperial woman, rich, masterly, and skilful, with a brilliant career before you.”

“Humble yourself before God and your own soul, miserable woman!” the inner voice replied. “Repent, or that murdered man will take his stand at your side forever.”

“He owed you this vengeance,” her evil spirits hinted, “for your great disappointment. If he had not been a nerveless dreamer, full of feeble scruples and sham ambitions, you would have had all your heart desired. He basely cheated you. He promised everything, and performed nothing. He was the pride of the Province; he let himself sink into insignificance. Poor-spirited nobody! It was a kindness to snuff out his mean and paltry life.”

“Did you see his gentle face as he fell?” the counter influence made answer. “How gray and old he was! Do you remember him?—it seems but yesterday—a fair youth, kindling with the hopes that to him were holy. You loved him sometimes,—do you not recognize those moments as your noblest? Have not

yours been the false ambitions and the idle dreams? Is not all this misery and failure the result of your first trifling with sin, and then choosing it? Disloyal woman,—if you are a woman, and not a fiend,—your cruelty has brought defeat and shame upon you! Profit by this moment of quiet reflection! see how the broken law revenges itself!"

"Yes, madam," the other voices here interrupted, "you cannot escape what your weakness calls shame. You will never live down scandal. The untempted people will never admit you to their ranks. Scorn them. Do not yield to feeble regrets. Be yourself,—your brave, defiant self!"

The Furies were getting the better. The virago was more and more overpowering the woman. Sometimes she sat patient. Sometimes she raged and struggled impotently with her bonds. It was terrible in the dim parlor to watch her face, and mark the tokens of that mad war within.

The fire in the chimney had been slowly heating the logs all this time. They were ripe to blaze. Suddenly they burst into a bright flame.

Mrs. Brothertoft looked up and saw herself in the mirror over the fireplace. There was hardly time for a thrill of self-admiration. The same flash that showed her her own face revealed also

the reflection of the portrait behind her. She saw the heads of Colonel Brothertoft and his white horse looking through the torn curtain. She had not glanced that way since her scene of yesterday evening with the picture. She had evaded a sight that recalled her treason. Now it forced itself upon her. Here she was bound; and there, over her own head in the mirror, was a ghostly shadow of what?

What! was this the ghostlier image of her husband's very ghost? Was he there in the canvas? Had he stolen away out of that dead thing once his body, lying only a few steps and two doors off? Was he there watching her? Why did he wear that triumphant smile? He was not used to smile much in the dreary old times;—never to sneer as this semblance was doing. Even that beast, the white horse, shared in his master's exultation over her captivity,—his nostrils swelled, and he seemed to pant for breath enough to neigh over a victory.

She stared an instant, fascinated by that faint image. There was a certain vague sense of relief in its presence. This shadow of her husband murdered might be a terror; but he intervened a third party in the hostile parley and the thickening war between her two selves. This memento of remorse came to the succor of the almost beaten relics of her better nature,

and commanded them to turn and make head again against that reckless, triumphant, bedlam creature, who was fast gaining the final mastery and absorbing her total being.

Was it thus? Had this image of a ghost come to say, "My wife, the old tie cannot break. I come to plead with you not to annihilate the woman, not to repel the medicine of remorse, and make yourself an incurable, irreclaimable fiend," — was this his errand of mercy?

Or did he stand there to hound on the Frenzies, spiritual essences, to her, to him visible beings, whom she felt seducing her? Was he smiling with delight to see her spirit zigzagging across the line between madness and sanity, and staggering farther, every turn, away from self-control? Which was this shadow's office?

While she trembled between these questions, still staring at those two reflections in the mirror, — herself and that image of the portrait, — suddenly the flash of flame in the chimney went out. A downward draught sent clouds of white smoke drifting about the room.

Mrs. Brothertoft peered a moment into the darkness. Her own reflection in the mirror was just visible, as she stirred her head. She missed the other. But there were strange sounds suddenly awakened, — a strange whispering through the house.

So long as her seeming, ghostly companion was visible, she had kept down her terror. Now, as she fancied it still present but unseen, a great dread fell upon her. She writhed in her bonds to turn and face that portrait on the wall. She could, with all her pains, only move enough to see a little corner of the curtain.

Did it move? Would something unearthly presently put aside those dusky folds, and come rustling to her side?

She listened a moment, and then screamed aloud.

The sound of her own voice a little reassured her. She laughed harshly, and her soliloquy went on, but wilder, and without the mild entreaties of her better self.

“What a fool I am to disturb myself with mere paint and canvas! But I will have that picture burnt,—yes, burnt, to-morrow morning. The man is gone, and every relic of him and his name shall perish from the earth. How plainly I seem to see him lying there dead, with his face upturned! What? Do dead men stir? I think he stirred. Do you dare to lift your finger and point at me? I had a right to shoot housebreakers. Put down your finger, sir! . You will not? Bah! Do what you please, you cannot terrify me. You shall be burnt, burnt,—do you hear? I smell fire strangely.

The smoke from that chimney,—yes, nothing else. I am afraid I shall be cold before morning; but now I am feverish. The air seems hot and dry. I suppose I have grown excited, tied here. What is that low rustling all the while? Sometimes it seems to come from the cellar, then it is here. Any one in this room? Speak! Dewitt, Sarah, is that you come home? No answer; and this whispering grows louder. Some other chimney must be smoking. I can hardly breathe. I must try to sleep, or I shall go mad before morning with that dead man in the house. Put down your finger, sir! Don't point at me like a school-boy! What! Is he coming? Is that his step I hear in the hall? Let me see, he has only two steps to make to the door, five across the hall, then two more and he could lean over and whisper what he thought of me."

She listened awhile to the strange sounds below, and then went on: "If you come in here, Edwin Brothertoft, and speak to me, I shall go crazy. I cannot hear any of your meek talk. Lie where you are till morning, and then, if you wish, you shall be buried. Perhaps burning was a little too harsh. Morning is not many hours away. It must be nearly ten o'clock. But if this smoke grows any thicker, I shall certainly smother. These ghastly noises get louder and louder. What can that crash be? Is the

dead man coming ? Help, help ! Keep him away ! Mr. Brothertoft, Edwin, if you love me, pray stop fumbling at that latch. You know how indulgent you always were to my little fancies ; do not come in, if you please. I am afraid, Edwin, afraid. I am so fevered, tied here by those cursed brigands, that I shall go mad. I am suffocating with this smoke. Will some one bring me a little water ? But when you come, do not look into that room across the hall. There is a gray-headed man lying there. He may say I murdered him. Do not take notice of him, he was always weak-minded. He will say I insulted, wronged, dishonored him, and made his life a burden and a shame. Do not listen to scandal against a woman ; but bring me a drop, one drop of water to cool my throat, for I am burning with a horrible fever. If these strange noises underneath and all around do not cease, I shall certainly go mad. What can it mean ? I hear sounds like an army. I would rather not receive your friends at present, Mr. Brothertoft, if it is their feet and voices I hear. This smoke makes my eyes red, and you always were proud of my beauty, you know. What ! have they lighted their torches, those ghosts in the hall ? Or is this glow through the room the moon ? No. ' My God ! FIRE ! I shall burn. O Lucy, Lucy ! O Edwin, help ! '

XXIII.

EDWIN BROTHERTOFT came galloping up to the flames. Had he won this race, with a life for its prize?

The maddened mare tore forward, as if she would leap in among the loud riot there.

Fire everywhere! A mob of arrogant, roaring, frenzied flames possessed the cellar and the ground-floor. Each window, so long a peaceful entrance for sunbeams, now glowed with light within, or thrust out great cruel blades of fire, striking at darkness. Fire sheathed the base of the turret. Agile flames were climbing up its sides, and little playful flashes seized the creepers that overhung Lucy's window, and, clinging to these, peered in through the panes, looking for such diet as they craved.

The husband turned the corner of the house, and galloped up to the window,—that window where an hour ago he had stood gazing at the proud, hateful face of the woman he loved so bitterly.

The white horse and its rider looked in at the

window. And this is what the one quick, comprehensive glance of horror showed them, as a draught of air dragged the smoke away.

Opposite, on the wall, the two heads of the picture were just yielding to the flames around them. Little buds of flame were sprouting through the floor, little tendrils wreathing the doors, and drawing a closer circle about the figure at their centre. There she sat, as if this scene was prepared to illuminate her beauty. A gush of air lifted the smoke like a curtain, and there she was sitting, her black hair towering above her pale forehead, her white arms bound to the chair, and the red light of her diamond resting upon her white bosom.

The smoke had half suffocated her. But she was revived by the sudden flood of air, as a burned door gave way. She turned her head toward the window,— did her spirit tell her that the heart she had wounded was there? She lifted her feeble head as her husband dashed forward, and it seemed to him that, amid all the snarling and roaring of the flames, he could hear her moan, “Help, Edwin! Help!”

The bulbs of flame through the floor shot up and grew rank, the wreaths of flame reached out and spread fast as the beautiful tendrils of a magic vine, the smoke drifted together again, and hid the room and the figure sitting there.

Over the carpet of flame, through the bower of flame, where long streamers redder than autumn hung and climbed, through the thick, blinding, suffocating, baffling smoke, Edwin Brothertoft sprang in to save his wife.

God help him, for his love is strong !

By this time, from the Tartar frigate and her consorts, boats'-crews were making for the burning house. They hoped to handle and furl the flames, as they would a flapping maintopsail in a gale. By this time the Manor people were also hurrying up, with neighborly intent to fling looking-glasses and crockery from the windows, and save them.

The Tartars were exhilarated by the splendid spectacle of fire in revolt. It was indeed a wild and passionate scene. From every window fingers of flame beckoned the world to behold it. And now on Lucy's turret Fire had hoisted its banner, as in a castle the flag goes up when the master comes to hold holiday.

The sailors gained the foot of the lawn. This pageant burst upon them. They sprang forward with a hurrah. Suddenly the foremost paused and huddled together. What is it ?

A dark figure, bearing some heavy burden, appeared at the only window of the front where the flames were not overflowing in full streams and fountaining upward.

The figure came fighting forward. Fire shouted, and clutched at it. Smoke poured around, to bewilder it. The figure—a man's form—staggered and fell. Inward or outward—inward into that fiery furnace, or outward toward the quiet, frosty air of night—the sailors could not see.

They rushed on more eagerly, but this time without the cheer.

Only the bravest, with Commodore Hotham himself at their head, dared face the flames, and touch the scorching heat to seek for that escaping figure they had seen.

They found him lying without, under the great window,—a man, and in his arms a burned and blackened thing. It might be, they thought, a woman.

They carried them away where the air was cool, and the crisp frost was unmelted on the grass. The man breathed, and moaned. No one knew his face, masked with black smoke.

With the neighbors, Mrs. Dewitt now came running up, and joined the group.

“See!” said she, with a shudder. “This was my mistress. She always wore this diamond on her neck in the evening. She is dead. No; she breathes!”

Yes; there was the gem, showing red reflections of the flames. An hour ago the woman

had been a beauty, and the diamond a point of admiration, saying, "Mark this white neck and this fair bosom!" Now it made the utter ruin there more pitiful.

Some one led forward Volante, drooping and all in a foam. There was evidently some mystery in this disaster. "Take these burned creatures to the nearest house," said Hotham. "And now, boys, some of you try to save the stables. Some come with me at the house. There were more people in it."

The sailors fought fire. The others carried the two bodies to Bilsby's farm-house. The flames showed them their path under the red-leaved trees of October.

The same ruddy light was guiding Lucy Brothertoft on her way to what a little while ago was home.

Long before she reached the spot, the roar and frenzy of the flames had subsided.

Nothing was left but the ragged walls and the red ruins of the Manor-House. It had been punished by fire for the misery and sin it had sheltered.

A guard of sailors, under a lieutenant, protected what little property had been saved. Lucy learned from them how an unknown man had rescued her mother to die away from the flames.

She left Voltaire to make some plausible story of the kidnapping, and to invent a release of hers from the captors' hands, when the fire they had accidentally kindled was discovered.

She hastened to help the father she loved and the mother she pitied so deeply.

Jierck Dewitt followed her to Bilsby's door.

"Go, Jierck!" she said. "It makes me shudder to see you, and think of this dreadful harm you have done. Go and tell the whole to Major Skerrett."

"Will you speak to my wife, Miss Lucy, and show her how she is to blame,—how her wrong sent me wrong? Tell her how she and I are linked in with ruin here. Perhaps it will help you to forgive me if you can better her."

Lucy promised.

She entered the farm-house to encounter her holy duties with her parents.

Jierck hurried off to meet Major Skerrett, give him the sorrowful history of the night, and warn him away from a region that would be alive by daylight, and bayonetting haystacks and hollow trees for kidnappers.

The penitent fellow could get no farther on his return than Cedar Ridge. There he saw the red embers of the Manor-House watching him from the edge of the horizon, like the eye of a Cyclops. He was fascinated, and sank down at the

foot of the uncanny old cedar, sick with horror and fatigue.

Skerrett and Canady, pressing anxiously on, found Jierck there at sunrise, asleep and half dead with cold. They roused him, and heard his story.

A little wreath of smoke alone marked the site of the Manor-House. Here was the starting-point, there was the goal of Edwin Brothertoft's night gallop. It thrilled the Major to hear of that wild ride, and to fancy he saw the white horse dashing through the darkness on that noble errand of mercy.

"Some men would have said, 'Curse her! let her burn! She's hurt me worse than fire'll hurt her,'" says Hendrecus. "Some would have took the turns of the road, and got to the house when it was nothing but chimbleys. Some would have been afeard of being known, and shot for a rebel. I've heard say that the Patroon was n't one of the strong kind; but he's done a splendid thing here, and I'm proud of myself that I was born on the same soil, and stand a chance to have some of the same natural grit into me."

Nothing further could be done, and it was not safe to loiter. The three returned over the Highlands to Putnam's army. And that day, and for many days, Peter Skerrett meditated on

this terrible end of the sorrow and sin at Brothertoft Manor. He traced with ghastly interest the different paths by which vengeance converged upon the guilty woman, and saw with what careful method her crime had prepared its own punishment. "God grant," said he, "that she may live to know what love and pity did to save her from the horror of her penalty!"

XXIV.

WOULD that marred and ruined being, once the beautiful Mrs. Brothertoft, ever revive enough to ask and receive forgiveness from her husband ?

Lucy did not dare to hope it. She watched the breathing corpse, and looked to see it any moment escape from its bodily torture into death.

Edwin Brothertoft was but little harmed by the flames. A single leap had carried him through the fiery circle which was devouring his wife, as she sat bound. In an instant he had dragged her away over the falling floor, cut her free, and was at the window struggling through. He had been almost stifled by the smoke, but his hurts were slight. In a few days he was at his wife's bedside.

He alone could interpret the sad, sad language of her suffering moans. Her soul, half dormant, in a body robbed of all its senses, seemed to perceive his presence and his absence by some spiritual touch. Would she ever hear his words of peace ?

The red, ripe leaves grew over-ripe, and fell, and buried October. Then came the first days of November, with their clear, sharp sunshine, and bold, blue sky, and massive white clouds, sailing with the northwest wind a month before the snow-drifts. Sweet Indian summer followed. Its low southern breezes whispered the dying refrain of the times of roses and passionate sunshine.

Edwin Brothertoft sat by his wife's window one twilight of that pensive season.

A new phase in his life had begun from the night of the rescue. By that one bold act of heroism he had leaped out of the old feebleness. He felt forgotten forces stir in him. His long sorrow became to him as a sickness from which a man rises fresh and purified.

In this mood, with the dim landscape before him, a symbol of his own sombre history, and the glowing sky of evening beyond, symbolizing the clear and open regions of his mind's career henceforth,—in this mood he grew tenderer for his wife than ever before.

It was no earthly love he felt for her. That had perished long ago. Deceit on her side wounded it. Disloyalty killed it. The element of passion was gone. There would have been a deep sense of shame in recalling his lover fondness once for a woman since unfaithful. But

now he looked back upon her wrongs and his errors as irremediable facts, and he could pity both alike. The tendency of such a character as hers, so trained as hers, to some great rebellion against the eternal laws, some great trial of its strength with God, and to some great and final lesson of defeat, became plain to him. The law of truth in love and faith in marriage is the law a woman is likely to break if she is a law-breaker.

She had broken it, and he divined the spiritual warfare and the knowledge of defeat and degradation which had been her spiritual punishment, bitterer to bear than this final corporeal vengeance.

Entering into her heart and reading the thoughts there, he utterly forgave and pitied her.

And for himself,—what harm had she done him? None,—so he plainly saw. Except for the disenchanting office of this great sorrow, he would have lived and died a worldly man. When his poetic ardors passed with youth, he would have dwindled away a prosperous gentleman, lost his heroic and martyr spirit, and smiled or sneered or trembled at the shout for freedom through the land. Except for this great sorrow, his graceful gifts would have made him a courtier, his refinement would have become fas-

tidiousness, he would have learned to idolize the *status quo*, and then, when the moment came for self-sacrifice, he would have been false to his nobler self. That meanness and misery he had escaped. That he had escaped it, and knew himself to be a man wholly true, was victory. The world might repeat its old refrain of disappointment in his career; it might say, "He promised to be our brilliant leader,—he is nobody." But it could never say, "See, there is Brothertoft! He was an ardent patriot; but wealth spoiled him, the Court bought him, and he left us meanly."

"My life," he thought, "has been somewhat a negative. I have missed success. I have missed the joy of household peace. And yet I bear no grudge against my destiny. I have never for one moment been false to the highest truth, and that is a victory greater than success."

These last words he had spoken aloud.

In reply, he heard a stir and a murmur from his wife.

He turned to her, and in the dusk he could see that her life was recoiling from death to gain strength to die. Voice and expression returned to her.

"Edwin!" she called to him, feebly.

"Jane?" he answered.

In the pleading tone of her cry, in the sweet

affection of his one word of response, each read the other's heart. There was no need of long interpretation. To her yearning for pardon and love, her name upon his lips gave full assurance that both were granted.

She reached blindly for his hand. He took hers tenderly. And there by the solemn twilight they parted for a time. Death parted them. She awoke in eternity. He stayed, to share a little longer in the dreamy work of life.

XXV.

A WORD of farewell to Major Kerr.

He had a horrid, horrid time at Fishkill.

Little but pork and beans to eat, little but apple-jack to drink, nothing but discomfiture to think of.

He experienced shame.

A letter was conveyed to him from Lucy Brothertoft. She wrote, as kindly as might be, what her real feelings had been toward him. She also described the sad tragedy of the night of his capture.

The conviction that he was a shabby fellow had by this time pierced Kerr's pachyderm. He was grateful to Lucy that she felt no contempt for him. But her gentle dignity reproached his unmanliness to her, and he became a very dejected penitent.

General Burgoyne has been an important character behind the scenes of this drama. He was a clever amateur playwright, and while our personages have been doing and suffering, the General has been at work at a historical play,

which he meant to name, "Saratoga, or the Last of the Rebels." There was some able acting in it, and all the world watched for the catastrophe quite breathless and agape. A brilliant pageant of a surrender closed the play, in which, to the general surprise, it was Jack Burgoyne, and not Horatio Gates, who gave up the sword and yielded the palm.

This news came flying down to Fishkill within ten days after Major Kerr's capture.

The unlucky fellow heard of the great take of British and Hessian officers. He began to fear prisoners were a drug in the market, and he must eat Continental fare till his stomach was quite gone.

"Write to Sir Henry Clinton," said Old Put, good-naturedly, "that I'll swap you for your value in the Yankees he took with the Highland forts."

Kerr indited a doleful account of his diet and impending dyspepsia to his General.

"I must have him back," said Sir Henry. "Anybody can be an Adjutant; but nobody in His Majesty's army can carve a saddle of mutton, or take out a sidebone, with Kerr."

The "swap" was arranged. The Major was put on board the *Tartar*, opposite Brothertoft Manor. He went off a sadder and a wiser man.

His capture had served its purpose of amusing

Putnam's desponding forces. The General had been able to write to Washington, "We have lost the Highland forts; but we have taken an Adjutant";— and Humphreys had composed a doggerel, beginning, — "O Muse, inspire my feeble pen, To sing a deed of merit, Performed to daunt the enemy, By Major Peter Skerrett."

Poor Kerr! when he reached New York, he was all the time haunted by regrets for his lost bride. "Up again, and take another!" is the only advice to be given under such circumstances. Some other flower of lower degree must be a substitute for the rose.

Cap'n Baylor, late of a whaler, now the chief oil man of New York, had a daughter Betty. She was a dumpy little maid. Flippers were her hands, fin-like were her feet. Nothing statuesque about her; but she tinkled with coin, and that tintinnabulation often opens the eyes of Pygmalion.

Her the Major wooed, and glibly won.

Cap'n Baylor oiled out his son-in-law's debts. Kerr resigned his Adjutancy, and took his wife home.

Gout presently carried off the knobby old Earl of Bendigh. The Bucephalus colt made Brother Tom acephalous, by throwing him over a wall. Brother Dick succumbed to Bacchus. Harry Kerr, our Kerr, became the sixth Earl of Bendigh.

His dumpy Countess studied manners in England, and acquired the delicious languor of a lady's-maid. She wore, morning, noon, and night, white gloves tight as thumbikins. She consumed perfume by the puncheon. But she was an honest, merry soul, who would stand no bullying. She kept Kerr in order, and made him quite a tolerably respectable fellow at last.

By and by, out of supreme gratitude to her for his wedded bliss, he had the Baylor arms looked up at the Herald's office. They were found, and quartered with his own, and may still be seen on the coat of the Kerrs, Bendigh branch, as follows: "On a rolling sea vert, a Leviathan rampant, sifflant proper. Crest, a hand grasping a harpoon. Motto, ILLIC SPIRAT, — THERE SHE BLOWS."

• • X X V I .

GENERAL VAUGHAN came down the river from Kingston, smelling of arson. Sir Henry Clinton destroyed the Highland forts and retired to New York. The Continental outposts forthwith re-occupied Peekskill.

With them came Peter Skerrett, and there were bristles on his upper lip a week or so old.

He hastened at once toward the Bilsby farm, where the Brothertofts had found shelter. He turned aside on the way to see the ruins of the Manor-House.

It was still brilliant October. If the trees that first put on crimsons and purples now were sere and bare, later comers kept up the pageant. Indeed, the great oaks had only just consented to the change of season. It took sharp frosts to scourge green summer out of them.

The woods seemed as splendid to Peter Skerrett as when he looked over them on the day of his adventure here. Nothing was altered, except in one forlorn spot.

There, instead of the fine old dignified Manor-

House, appeared only a dew-sodden heap of cinders and ashes,—the tragic monument of a tragedy.

“It did well to perish,” thought Skerrett. “It had sheltered crime. Its moral atmosphere was tainted. The pure had fled from it. Happiness never could dwell there.”

Peter stood leaning against a great oak-tree, and studying the scene. The autumn leaves around him dallied and drifted, and fell into the lap of earth. He lingered, he hesitated, and let his looks dally with the vagrant leaves, as they circled and floated in the quiet air, choosing the spots where they would lay them down and die.

Just now he was in such eager haste; and now he hesitated, he lingered, he shrank from an interview he had ardently anticipated.

The fair girl he had aided to save from a miserable fate,—her face, seen for a moment dimly by starlight, ever haunted him. These heavy sorrows, coming upon her young life, filled him with infinite pity. As he thought of her, the undeveloped true lover in him began to develop.

And now, standing in this place where he had first seen her in a moment of peril, where he had felt the grateful pressure of her hand, he perceived how large and vigorous his passion had grown from these small beginnings.

He feared the meeting he had yearned for. It was to assure him whether this was really love he felt, or but another passing fancy like the others past.

And if it were the great, deep love he hoped,—if, when he saw her face, and touched her hand, and heard her voice again, his soul recognized hers as the one companion soul,—this filled him with another dread.

For if to know himself a lover, and half foresee that, after long and thorough proof of worthiness, he might be beloved, were the earliest thrill of an immortal joy; so this meeting, if it named him lover, and yet convinced him by sure tokens that his love would never be returned, was the first keen pang of a sorrow immeasurable.

No wonder that he waited, and traced the circuits of the falling leaves, and simulated to his mind a hundred motives for delay.

It was so still in the warm, sunshiny afternoon that he could hear the crumbling cinders fall in the ruins, and all about him the ceaseless rustle of the showering foliage.

But presently a noise more articulate sounded on the dry carpet of the path behind him. A light脚步 was coming slowly toward this desolated spot. It seemed to Skerrett that he divined whose step would bring her hither to read again the lesson of the ruins.

He walked forward a little, that his sudden appearance against the oak might not startle the new-comer. He would not turn. It was new to the brave and ardent fellow to perceive timidity in his heart, and to evade an encounter with any danger.

The footstep quickened,—a woman's surely. In a moment he heard a sweet voice call his name.

A shy and timorous call, a gentle, trembling tone,—it came through the sunshine and made all the air music.

Her voice! It was the voice he had longed and dreaded to hear. But now he feared no more. He believed that his immortal joy was begun, and these tremors of his soul, in answer to the trembles of her call, could never be the earliest warnings of an agony.

He saw her face again, fairer than he had dreamed, in the happy sunlight. He felt again the thankful pressure of her hand. He listened to her earnest words of gratitude.

They spoke a little—he gravely, she tearfully—of the tragedy of her mother's life. This shadow deepened the tenderness of the lover. And she, perceiving this, drew closer to him, giving tokens, faint but sure, as he fancied, of the slow ripening happiness to grow henceforth.

Then she guided him to see his friend, her father.

The level sunbeams of evening went before them in the path. They disappeared amid the wood. Golden sunshine flowed after them. The trees showered all the air full of golden leaves of good omen.

It seems the fair beginning of a faithful love.

Will it end in doubt, sorrow, shame, and forgiveness ; or in trust, joy, constancy, and peace ?

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